



Engraved by

Published for the British Theatre June 1797

*M^r GARRICK in the Character of S^r JOHN BRUTE
— So! how d'ye like my Shapes now?*

643. h5.
7
BELL'S EDITION.



THE
PROVOK'D WIFE.

A COMEDY,

As written by Sir JOHN VANBURGH.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.

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P R O L O G U E.

SINCE 'tis th' intent and business of the stage,
 To copy out the follies of the age;
 To hold to ev'ry man a faithful glass,
 And shew him of what species he's an ass,
 I hope the next that teaches in the school,
 Will shew our author he's a scribbling fool:
 And that the satire may be sure to bite,
 Kind Heav'n, inspire some venom'd priest to write,
 And grant some ugly lady may indite;
 For I would have him lash'd, by Heav'n, I would,
 Till his presumption swam away in blood.
 Three plays at once proclaim a face of brass;
 No matter what they are, that's not the case,
 To write three plays, e'en that's to be an ass.
 But what I least forgive, he knows it too;
 For to his cost he lately has known you.
 Experience shews, to many a writer's smart,
 You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part;
 So much of the old serpent's sting you have,
 You love to damn, as Heav'n delights to save.
 In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
 For public good, upon the stage appear,
 He meets ten thousand smiles to dissipate his fear.
 All tickle on th' adventuring young beginner,
 And only scourge the incorrigible sinner;
 They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
 So gentle, that his merits still may stand;
 Kindly they bury the follies of his pen,
 That he may shun them when he writes again.
 But 'tis not so in this good-natur'd town;
 All's one, an ox, a poet, or a crown;
 Old England's play, was always knocking down.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>	<i>Covent-Garden.</i>
<i>Constant,</i>	Mr. Brereton.	Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Heartfree,</i>	Mr. Bensley.	Mr. Smith.
<i>Sir John Brute,</i>	Mr. Garrick.	Mr. Macklin.
<i>Lord Rake, a companion to Sir John,</i>	Mr. Davis.	Mr. Mahon.
<i>Col. Bully, another,</i>	Mr. Vernon.	Mr. Mattocks.
<i>Razor, Valet de Chambre to Sir John,</i>	Mr. Baddeley.	Mr. Quick.
<i>Justice of the Peace,</i>	Mr. Bransby.	Mr. Thompson.

W O M E N.

<i>Lady Brute,</i>	Miss Younge:	Mrs. Bulkely.
<i>Belinda,</i>	Mrs. Greville.	Miss Leeson.
<i>Lady Fancyful,</i>	Mrs. Abington.	Mrs. Mattocks.
<i>Mademoiselle,</i>	Mrs. Bradshaw.	Mrs. Green.
<i>Cornet, Servant to Lady Fancyful,</i>	_____	_____

Constable and Watch.

THE
PROVOK'D WIFE.

* * *The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.*

ACT I.

SCENE E, Sir John Brute's House.

Enter Sir John.

SIR JOHN.

WHAT cloying meat is love, when matrimony's the sauce to it!—Two years marriage has debauch'd my five senses. Every thing I see, every thing I hear, every thing I feel, every thing I smell, and every thing I taste, methinks, has wife in't. No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, or old maid of being chaste, as I am of being married. Sure there's a secret curse entailed upon the very name of wife. My lady is a young lady, a fine lady, a witty lady, a virtuous lady—and yet I hate her. There is but one thing on earth I loath beyond her, and that's fighting. Would my courage come up to a fourth part of my ill-nature, I'd stand buff to her relations, and thrust her out of doors. But marriage has sunk me down to such an ebb of resolution, I dare not draw my sword, tho' even to get rid of my wife. But here she comes.

Enter Lady Brute.

Lady Brute. Do you dine at home to-day, Sir John?

Sir John. Why, do you expect I should tell you what I don't know myself?

Lady Brute. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir John. If thinking wrong were an excuse for impertinence,

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tinence, women might be justified in most things they say or do.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry I have said any thing to displease you.

Sir John. Sorry for things past, is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

Lady Brute. My enquiry was only that I might have provided what you liked.

Sir John. Six to four you had been in the wrong there again; for what I liked yesterday I don't like to-day, and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I mayn't like to-morrow.

Lady Brute. But if I had asked you what you liked—

Sir John. Why, then there would be more asking about it than the thing is worth.

Lady Brute. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir John. Aye; but that sort of knowledge is not a wife's talent.

Lady Brute. Whate'er my talent is, I'm sure my will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir John. If women were to have their wills, the world would be finely govern'd.

Lady Brute. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise: you married me for love.

Sir John. And you me for money: so you have your reward, and I have mine.

Lady Brute. What is it that disturbs you?

Sir John. A parson.

Lady Brute. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir John. He has married me, and be damn'd to him.

[Exit.

Lady Brute. The devil's in the fellow, I think—I was told before I married him, that thus 'twould be; but I thought I had charms enough to govern him; and that where there was an estate, a woman must needs be happy: so my vanity has deceived me, and my ambition has made me uneasy. But there's some comfort still; if one would be revenged of him, these are good times; a woman may have a gallant, and a separate maintenance too—The surly puppy!—Yet he's a fool for it; for hitherto he
has

has been no monster : but who knows how far he may provoke me ? I never loved him, yet I have been ever true to him ; and that, in spite of all the attacks of art and nature upon a poor weak woman's heart, in favour of a tempting lover. Methinks, so noble a defence as I have made, should be rewarded with a better usage——Or who can tell——Perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband, may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover——But hold—let me go no further—I think I have a right to alarm this surly brute of mine ; but if I know my heart, it will never let me go so far as to injure him.

Enter Belinda.

Lady Brute. Good-morrow, dear cousin.

Bel. Good-morrow, Madam. You look pleased this morning.

Lady Brute. I am so.

Bel. With what, pray ?

Lady Brute. With my husband.

Bel. Drown husbands ! for yours is a provoking fellow. As he went out just now, I prayed him to tell me what time of day 'twas ; and he asked me if I took him for the church-clock, that was obliged to tell all the parish.

Lady Brute. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, Belinda, he has used me so barbarously of late, that I could almost resolve to play the downright wife—and cuckold him.

Bel. That would be downright, indeed.

Lady Brute. Why, after all, there is more to be said for it than you'd imagine, child. He is the first aggressor, not I.

Bel. Ah, but you know we must return good for evil.

Lady Brute. That may be a mistake in the translation. Pr'ythee, be of my opinion, Belinda ; for I'm positive I'm in the right ; and if you'll keep up the prerogative of a woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do any thing you have a mind to. But I shall play the fool, and jest on, till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

Bel. I shan't take the liberty, Madam, to think of any thing that you desire to keep a secret from me.

Lady

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Lady Brute. Alas, my dear, I have no secrets! My heart could never yet confine my tongue.

Bel. Your eyes, you mean; for I am sure I have seen them gadding, when your tongue has been locked up safe enough.

Lady Brute. My eyes gadding! Pr'ythee, after whom, child?

Bel. Why, after one that thinks you hate him as much as I know you love him.

Lady Brute. Constant, you mean.

Bel. I do so.

Lady Brute. Lord, what should put such a thing into your head?

Bel. That which puts things into most people's heads, observation.

Lady Brute. Why, what have you observed, in the name of wonder?

Bel. I have observed you blush when you met him; force yourself away from him; and then be out of humour with every thing about you. In a word, never was a poor creature so spurred on by desire, or so reined in with fear!

Lady Brute. How strong is fancy!

Bel. How weak is woman!

Lady Brute. Pr'ythee, niece, have a better opinion of your aunt's inclination.

Bel. Dear aunt, have a better opinion of your niece's understanding.

Lady Brute. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

Lady Brute. Then you are resolved to persist?

Bel. Positively.

Lady Brute. And all I can say——

Bel. Will signify nothing.

Lady Brute. Tho' I should swear 'twere false——

Bel. I should think it true.

Lady Brute. Then let us forgive; [*Kissing her.*] for we have both offended: I, in making a secret; you, in discovering it.

Bel. Good-nature may do much: but you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon t'other.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true, Belinda, you have given me so many

many proofs of your friendship, that my reserve has been indeed a crime. ' But, that you may more easily forgive me, remember, child, that when our nature prompts us to a thing our honour and religion have forbid us, we would (wer't possible) conceal, even from the soul itself, the knowledge of the body's weakness.

' *Bel.* Well, I hope, to make your friend amends, you'll hide nothing from her for the future, tho' the body should still grow weaker and weaker.

' *Lady Brute.* No, from this moment I have no more reserve ;' and as a proof of my repentance, I own, Belinda, I'm in danger. ' Merit and wit assault me from without, nature and love solicit me within ; my husband's barbarous usage piques me to revenge ; and Satan, catching the fair occasion, throws in my way that vengeance, which of all vengeance, pleases woman best.

' *Bel.* 'Tis well Constant don't know the weakness of the fortification ; for, o' my conscience, he'd soon come on to the assault.

' *Lady Brute.* Ay, and I'm afraid, carry the town too.' But whatever you may have observed, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no coquet, Belinda ; ' and if you follow my advice, you'll never be one neither. 'Tis true, coquetry is one of the main ingredients in the natural composition of a woman ; and I, as well as others, could be well enough pleased to see a crowd of young fellows ogling, and glancing, and watching all occasions to do forty foolish officious things ; nay, should some of them push on even to hanging or drowning—why—faith—if I should let pure woman alone, I should e'en be but too well pleased with it.

' *Bel.* I'll swear 'twould tickle me strangely.

' *Lady Brute.* But after all, 'tis a vicious practice in us to give the least encouragement, but where we design to come to a conclusion :' for 'tis an unreasonable thing to engage a man in a disease, which we before-hand resolve we will never apply a cure to.

Bel. 'Tis true ; but then a woman must abandon one of the supreme blessings of her life. For I am fully convinced, no man has half that pleasure in gallanting a mistress, as a woman has in jilting a gallant.

Lady

Lady Brute. The happiest woman then on earth must be our neighbour.

Bel. Oh, the impertinent composition! She has vanity and affectation enough to make her a ridiculous original, and in spite of all that art and nature ever furnished to any of her sex before her.

Lady Brute. She concludes all men her captives; and whatever course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks 'tis modesty, and takes it for a proof of their passion.

Lady Brute. And if they are rude to her, 'tis conduct, and done to prevent town-talk.

Bel. When her folly makes them laugh, she thinks ' they are pleased with her wit.

Lady Brute. And when her impertinence makes them ' dull, concludes they are jealous of her favours.'

Bel. All their actions and their words, she takes for granted, aim at her.

Lady Brute. And pities all other women, because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Pray, out of pity to ourselves, let us find a better subject, for I'm weary of this. Do you think your husband inclined to jealousy?

Lady Brute. Oh, no; he does not love me well enough for that. Lord, how wrong men's maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their wives, unless they are very fond of them; whereas, they ought to consider the women's inclinations, for there depends their fate. Well, men may talk; but they are not so wise as we—that's certain.

Bel. At least in our affairs.

Lady Brute. Nay, I believe we should out-do them in the business of the state too; for, methinks, they do and undo, and make but bad work on't.

Bel. Why then don't we get into the intrigues of government as well as they?

Lady Brute. Because we have intrigues of our own, that make us more sport, child. And so let's in and consider of them.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE,

SCENE, *a Dressing-room.*

Enter Lady Fanciful, Mademoiselle, and Cornet.

Lady Fan. How do I look this morning?

Cor. Your Ladyship looks very ill, truly.

Lady Fan. Lard, how ill-natured thou art, Cornet! to tell me so, tho' the thing should be true. Don't you know that I have humility enough to be but too easily out of conceit with myself?—Hold the glass; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have——Mademoiselle, let me have your opinion too.

Mad. My opinion pe, Matam, dat your Ladyship never look so well in your life.

Lady Fan. Well, the French are the prettiest, obliging people: they say the most acceptable, well-mannered things——and never flatter.

Mad. Your Ladyship say great justice inteed.

Lady Fan. Nay, every thing's just in my house but Cornet. The very looking-glass gives her the *dementi*. But I'm almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging. [*Looking affectedly in the glass.*]

Mad. Inteed, Matam, your face pe handsomer than all de looking-glass in de world, *croyez moy*.

Lady Fan. But is it possible my eyes can be so languishing——and so very full of fire?

Mad. Matam, if de glass was burning-glass, I believe your eyes set de fire in de house.

Lady Fan. You may take that nightgown, Mademoiselle—Get out of the room, Cornet; I can't endure you. This wench, methinks, does look so insufferably ugly.

Mad. Every ting look ugly, Matam, dat stand by your Ladyship.

Lady Fan. No, really, Mademoiselle, methinks you look mighty pretty.

Mad. Ah, Matam, de moon have no *eclat*, ven de sun appear.

Lady Fan. Oh, pretty expression! Have you ever been in love, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Ouy, Matam.

[*Sighing.*]

Lady Fan. And were you beloved again?

Mad. No, Matam.

[*Sighing.*]

Lady

Lady Fan. Oh, ye gods, what an unfortunate creature should I be in such a case ! But nature has made me nice for my own defence—I'm nice, strangely nice, Mademoiselle. I believe, were the merit of whole mankind bestowed upon one single person, I should still think the fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him—And yet I could love, nay, fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: for I'm not cruel, Mademoiselle ; I'm only nice.

Mad. Ah, Matam ! I wish I was fine gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de world, to get a little way into your heart. I make song, I make verse, I give you de serenade, I give great many present to Mademoiselle ; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang myself, I drown myself—*Ah, ma chere dame, que je vous aimerois !*

[*Embracing her.*]

Lady Fan. Well, the French have strange obliging ways with them ; you may take those two pair of gloves, Mademoiselle.

Mad. Me humbly tank my sweet lady.

[*Enter Servant with a letter.*]

Ser. Madam, here's a letter for your Ladyship. [*Exit.*]

Lady Fan. 'Tis thus I am importun'd every morning, Mademoiselle—Pray, how do the French ladies, when they are thus *acablées* ?

Mad. Matam, dey never complain.—Au contraire, when one Frense lady have got a hundred lover, den she do all she can—to get a hundred more.

Lady Fan. Well let me die, they have *le goût bon*. For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be adored by all the men, and envied by all the women—Yet, I'll swear, I'm concerned at the torture I give them. Lard ! why was I formed to make the whole creation uneasy ?—But let me read my letter—[*Reads.*]—“ If you have a mind to hear of your faults, instead of being praised for your virtues, take the pains to walk in the Green-walk in St. James's Park, with your woman, an hour hence. You'll there meet one, who hates you for some things, as he could love you for others : and therefore is willing to endeavour your reformation—If you come to the place I mention, you'll know who I am ; if you don't, you never shall : so take your choice.”—This is strangely familiar, Mademoiselle !

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Mademoiselle! Now have I a provoking fancy to know who this impudent fellow is.

Mad. Den take your scarf and your mask, and go to de rendezvous. De Frense laty do justement comme ça.

Lady Fan. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a man, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Eh, pouiquoy non?

Lady Fan. What, and a man perhaps I never saw in my life!

Mad. Tant mieux: c'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.

Lady Fan. Why, how do I know what designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me, for aught I know.

Mad. Ravish!—Bagatelle. I would fain see one impudent rogue ravish Mademoiselle. Oui, je le voudrois.

Lady Fan. Oh, but my reputation, Mademoiselle, my reputation; ah, ma chere reputation!

Mad. Matam——Quand on l'a une fois perdu—on n'en est plus embarrassée.

Lady Fan. Fie, Mademoiselle, fie; reputation is a jewel.

Mad. Qui coute bien chere, Matam.

Lady Fan. Why sure you would not sacrifice your honour to your pleasure!

Mad. Je suis philosophe.

Lady Fan. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if honour be a burden, Madememoiselle, must it not be borne?

Mad. Chaqu'un à sa façon——Quand quelque chose m'incommode, moi——je m'en defais, vite.

Lady Fan. Get you gone, you little naughty French-woman you: I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Mad. Turn me out of doors!——turn yourself out of doors, and go see what de gentleman have to say to you—Tenez. Voilà [*Giving her her things hastily.*] votre essharp, voilà votre coife, voilà votre masque, voilà tout. Hey, Mercure, coquin: call one chair for Matam, and one oder [*Calling within.*] for me. Va-t'en, vite. [*Turning to her lady, and helping her on hastily with her things.*] Allons, Matam; depechez vous donc. Mon dieu, quelles scruples!

Lady Fan. Well, for once, Mademoiselle, I'll follow your advice, out of the intemperate desire I have to know who this ill-bred fellow is. But I have too much delicatessen to make a practice on't.

Mad. Belle chose vraiment que la delicatessen, lors qu'il s'agit de divertir——à ça—Vous voilà équipée, partons.
—Hé bien !—qu'avez vous donc ?

Lady Fan. J'ai peur.

Mad. Je n'en ai point moi.

Lady Fan. I dare not go.

Mad. Demeurez donc.

Lady Fan. Je suis poltronne.

Mad. Tant pis pour vous.

Lady Fan. Curiosity's a wicked devil.

Mad. C'est une charmante sainte.

Lady Fan. It ruin'd our first parents.

Mad. Elle a bien diverti leurs enfans.

Lady Fan. L'honneur est contre.

Mad. Le plaisir est pour.

Lady Fan. Must I then go ?

Mad. Must you go ?——must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live ? De nature bid you do one, de nature bid you do toder. Vous me ferez enrager.

Lady Fan. But when reason corrects nature, Mademoiselle.

Mad. Elle est donc bien insolente, c'est sa sœur aînée.

Lady Fan. Do you then prefer your nature to your reason, Mademoiselle ?

Mad. Oui da.

Lady Fan. Pourquoi ?

Mad. Because my nature make me merry, my reason make me mad.

Lady Fan. Ah, la méchante François !

Mad. Ah, la belle Angloise ! [Forcing her lady off.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE, *St. James's Park.**Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.*

LADY FANCYFUL.

WELL, I vow, Mademoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident fellow is.*Enter Heartfree.*

Look, there's Heartfree! But sure it can't be him: he's a professed woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked eyes may have done?

Mad. Il nous approche, Matam.*Lady Fan.* Yes, 'tis he: now will he be most intolerably cavalier, though he should be in love with me.*Heart.* Madam, I'm your humble servant; I perceive you have more humility and good-nature than I thought you had.*Lady Fan.* What you attribute to humility and good-nature, Sir, may perhaps be only due to curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas had ill manners enough to write that letter. *[Throwing him his letter.]**Heart.* Well, and now I hope you are satisfied.*Lady Fan.* I am so, Sir; good-by t'ye.*Heart.* Nay, hold there; though you have done your business, I han't done mine: by your Ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest woman about town, or not? How she stares upon me! What! this passes for an impertinent question with you now, because you think you are so already.*Lady Fan.* Pray, Sir, let me ask you a question in my turn: by what right do you pretend to examine me?*Heart.* By the same right that the strong govern the weak, because I have you in my power; for you cannot get so quickly to your coach, but I shall have time enough to make you hear every thing I have to say to you.*Lady Fan.* These are strange liberties you take, Mr. Heartfree.*Heart.* They are so, Madam, but there's no help for it; for know that I have a design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, Sir!

Heart. Yes; and one that will turn to your glory, and my comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well, Sir.

Heart. Let me see—Your vanity, Madam, I take to be about some eight degrees higher than any woman's in the town, let t'other be who she will; and my indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now could you find the way to turn this indifference into fire and flame, methinks your vanity ought to be satisfied; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable terms.

Lady Fan. And pray at what rate would this indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an appetite to desire it?

Heart. Why, Madam, to drive a quaker's bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it—you must lay down—your affectation.

Lady Fan. My affectation, Sir!

Heart. Why I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

Lady Fan. You grow rude, Sir. Come, Mademoiselle, it is high time to be gone.

Mad. Allons, allons, allons.

Heart. [*Stopping them.*] Nay, you may as well stand still; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

Lady Fan. What mean you, Sir?

Heart. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful woman upon earth.

Lady Fan. Ungrateful! to whom?

Heart. To nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has nature done for me?

Heart. What you have undone by art! It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make them relish, and so turned you loose to your own discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own. There is not a feature in your face, but you have found the way to teach it some affected convulsion; your feet, your hands, your very fingers' ends are directed never to move without some ridi-

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ridiculous air or other; and your language is a suitable trumpet, to draw people's eyes upon the raree-show.

Mad. [*Afide.*] Est-ce qu'on fait l'amour en Angleterre comme ça?

Lady Fan. [*Afide.*] Now could I cry for madness, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it.

Heart. Now do you hate me for telling you the truth, but that's because you don't believe 'tis so; for were you once convinced of that, you'd reform, for your own sake.

Lady Fan. Every circumstance of nice breeding must needs appear ridiculous, to one who has so natural an antipathy to good manners.

Heart. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole world is of my opinion.

Lady Fan. Sir, though you, and all the world you talk of, should be so impertinently officious, as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave myself; I should still have charity enough for my own understanding, to believe myself in the right, and all you in the wrong.

Mad. Le voilà mort.

[*Exeunt Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.*]

Heart. [*Gazing after her.*] There her single clapper has published the sense of the whole sex. Well, this once I have endeavoured to wash the black-moor white, but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach sincerity to a courtier, generosity to an usurer, honesty to a lawyer, than discretion to a woman I see has once set her heart upon playing the fool.

Enter Constant.

Morrow, Constant.

Const. Good-morrow, Jack. What are you doing here this morning?

Heart. Doing! Guess, if you can.—Why I have been endeavouring to persuade my Lady Fancyful, that she's the most foolish woman about town.

Const. A pretty endeavour truly.

Heart. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have used her as an absolute king would do Magna Charta.

Const. And how does she take it?

Heart. As children do pills; bite them, but can't swallow them.

Const. But, pr'ythee, what has put it into your head, of all mankind, to turn reformer?

Heart. Why, one thing was, the morning hung upon my hands, I did not know what to do with myself: and another was, that as little as I care for women, I could not see with patience one that Heaven had taken such wonderous pains about, be so very industrious to make herself the jack-pudding of the creation.

Const. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cured of the same disease that makes me so very uneasy; for love, love is the devil, Heartfree.

Heart. And why do you let the devil govern you?

Const. Because I have more flesh and blood than grace and self-denial. My dear, dear mistress, 'sdeath! that so genteel a woman should be a saint, when religion's out of fashion.

Heart. Nay, she's much in the wrong truly; but who knows how far time and good example may prevail?

Const. Oh! they have played their parts in vain already: 'tis now two years since the fellow her husband invited me to his wedding; and there was the first time I saw that charming woman, whom I have loved ever since; but she is cold, my friend, still cold as the northern star.

Heart. So are all women by nature, which makes them so willing to be warmed.

Const. Oh, don't profane the sex; pr'ythee think them all angels for her sake; for she's virtuous even to a fault.

Heart. A lover's head is a good accountable thing truly; he adores his mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her because she won't be kind.

Const. Well, the only relief I expect in my misery is to see thee some day or other as deeply engaged as myself, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my misfortunes.

Heart. That day will never come, be assured, Ned: 'not but that I can pass a night with a woman, and for 'the time, perhaps, make myself as good sport as you

' can

' can do. Nay, I can court a woman too, call her nymph, angel, goddess, what you please : but here's the difference between you and I ; I persuade a woman she's an angel, and she persuades you she's one.' But, pr'y-thee, let me tell you how I avoid falling in love ; that which serves me for prevention, may chance to serve you for a cure.

Const. Well, use the ladies moderately then, and I'll hear you.

Heart. That using them moderately undoes us all : but I'll use them justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with. I always consider a woman, not as the taylor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the poet makes her ; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old grandmother Eve, had I seen her naked in the garden ; for I consider her turned inside out. Her heart well examined, I find there pride, vanity, covetousness, indiscretion ; but above all things, malice : plots eternally forging to destroy one another's reputations, and as honestly to charge the levity of men's tongues with the scandal ; hourly debates how to make poor gentlemen in love with them, with no other intent but to use them like dogs when they have done ; a constant desire of doing more mischief, and an everlasting war waged against truth and good-nature.

Const. Very well, Sir ; an admirable composition truly !

Heart. Then for her outside, I consider it meerly as an outside ; she has a thin tiffany covering, just over such stuff as you and I are made on. As for her motion, her mien, her airs, and all those tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your mistress at a coronation, dragging her peacock's train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twould strike you with all the awful thoughts that Heaven itself could pretend to from you : whereas I turn the whole matter into a jest, and suppose her strutting in the self same stately manner, with nothing on her but her stays, and her scanty quilted under petticoat.

Const. Hold thy profane tongue ; for I'll hear no more.

Heart. What, you'll love on then ?

Const. Yes.

Heart.

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Heart. Yet have no hopes at all.

Const. None.

Heart. Nay, the resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new philosophy, that love, like virtue, is its own reward: so you and your mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less learning are in coming together.

Const. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear Heartfree. *[Embracing him.]*

Heart. Nay, pr'ythee don't take me for your mistress; for lovers are very troublesome.

Const. Well, who knows what time may do?

Heart. And just now he was sure time could do nothing.

Const. Yet not one kind glance in two years, is somewhat strange.

Heart. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the business.

Const. Pr'ythee don't distract me.

Heart. Nay, you are a good handsome young fellow, she might use you better. Come, will you go see her? Perhaps she may have changed her mind; there's some hopes, as long as she's a woman.

Const. Oh, 'tis in vain to visit her! Sometimes, to get a sight of her, I visit that beast her husband, but she certainly finds some pretence to quit the room as soon as I enter.

Heart. It's much she don't tell him you have made love to her too; for that's another good-natured thing usual amongst women, in which they have several ends. Sometimes 'tis to recommend their virtue, that they may be kind with the greater security. Sometimes 'tis to make their husbands fight, in hopes they may be killed, when their affairs require it should be so; but most commonly 'tis to engage two men in a quarrel, that they may have the credit of being fought for; and if the lover's killed in the business, they cry, Poor fellow, he had ill luck—and so they go to cards.

Const. Thy injuries to women are not to be forgiven. Look to't, if ever you fall into their hands—

Heart. They can't use me worse than they do you, that peak well of them. Oh, ho! here comes the knight.

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Enter Sir John Brute.

Heart. Your humble servant, Sir John.

Sir John. Servant, Sir.

Heart. How does all your family?

Sir John. Pox o' my family.

Const. How does your Lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir John. Do! I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday; I han't been at home to-night.

Const. What, were you out of town?

Sir John. Out of town! No, I was drinking.

Const. You are a true Englishman; don't know your own happiness. If I were married to such a woman, I would not be from her a night, for all the wine in France.

Sir John. Not from her!—'Oons—what a time should a man have of that!

Heart. Why, there's no division, I hope.

Sir John. No; but there's a conjunction, and that's worse; a pox of the parson—Why the plague don't you two marry? I fancy I look like the devil to you.

Heart. Why, you don't think you have horns, do you?

Sir John. No; I believe my wife's religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heart. Have a care, knight, women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their hearts.

Const. Fy, fy! you have one of the best wives in the world, and yet you seem the most uneasy husband.

Sir John. Best wives!—the woman's well enough; she has no vice that I know of; but she's a wife, and—damna a wife; if I were married to a hogthead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it.

Heart. Why did you marry then? You were old enough to know your own mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry! I married because I had a mind to lay with her, and she would not let me.

Heart. Why did you not ravish her?

Sir John. Yes, and so have hedged myself into forty quarrels with her relations, besides buying my pardon:
but

but more than all that, you must know I was afraid of being damned in those days: for I kept sneaking cowardly company, fellows that went to church, said grace to their meat, and had not the least tincture of quality about them.

Heart. But I think you are got into a better gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, Sir, my Lord Rake and I are hand and glove: I believe we may get our bones broke together to-night. Have you a mind to share a frolic?

Const. Not I, truly; my talent lies in softer exercises.

Sir John. What, a down-bed and a strumpet? A pox of venery, I say. Will you come and drink with me this afternoon?

Const. I can't drink to-day; but we'll come and sit an hour with you if you will.

Sir John. Pough, pox, sit an hour! Why can't you drink?

Const. Because I'm to see my mistress.

Sir John. Who's that?

Const. Why do you use to tell?

Sir John. Yes.

Const. So won't I.

Sir John. Why?

Const. Because it is a secret.

Sir John. Would my wife knew it, 'twould be no secret long.

Const. Why, do you think she can't keep a secret?

Sir John. No more than she could keep Lent.

Heart. Pr'ythee, tell it her to try, Constant.

Sir John. No, pr'ythee don't, that I mayn't be plagued with it.

Const. I'll hold you a guinea you don't make her tell it you.

Sir John. I'll hold you a guinea I do.

Const. Which way?

Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.

Heart. Nay, if any thing does it, that will.

Const. But do you think, Sir—

Sir John. 'Oons, Sir, I think a woman and a secret are the two impertinentest themes in the universe; therefore pray let's hear no more of my wife nor your mistress. Damn them both with all my heart and every thing else
that

that daggles a petticoat, except four generous whores who are drunk with my Lord Rake and I ten times in a fortnight. [Exit Sir John.]

Const. Here's a dainty fellow for you! and the veriest coward too. But his usage of his wife makes me ready to stab the villain.

Heart. Lovers are short-sighted: all their senses run into that of feeling. This proceeding of his is the only thing on earth can make you fortunate. If any thing can prevail with her to accept a gallant, 'tis his usage of her. Pr'ythee, take heart, I have great hopes for you; and since I can't bring you quite off her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on; for a whining lover is the damnest companion upon earth.

Const. My dear friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for whilst they prevail, I have Elysium within me, and could melt with joy.

Heart. Pray no melting yet; 'let things go farther 'first.' This afternoon perhaps we shall make some advance. In the mean while, let's go dine at Locket's, and let hope get you a stomach. [Exit.]

SCENE, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful, and Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Did you ever see any thing so importune, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Inteed, Matam, to say de trute, he want leetel good-breeding.

Lady Fan. Good-breeding! He wants to be caned, Mademoiselle. An intolent fellow! and yet, let me expose my weakness, 'tis the only man on earth I could resolve to dispense my favours on, were he but a fine gentleman. Well, did men but know how deep an impression a fine gentleman makes in a lady's heart, they would reduce all their studies to that of good-breeding alone.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Will your Ladyship please to dine yet?

Lady Fan. Yes, let them serve, [Exit Servant.] Sure this Heartfree has bewitch'd me, Mademoiselle. 'You 'can't imagine how oddly he mixed himself in my 'thoughts during my rapture e'en now.' I vow 'tis a thousand

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houfand pities he is not more polished ; don't you think o ?

Mad. Matam, I think it fo great pity, that if I was in your Ladyship's place, I take him home in my houfe, I lock him up in my clofet, and I never let him go, till I teach him every ting dat fine lady expect from fine gentleman.

Lady Fan. Why truly I believe, I should soon fubdue his brutality ; for, without doubt, he has a ftrange penchant to grow fond of me, in fpite of his averfion to the fex, elfe he would ne'er have taken fo much pains about me. Lord, how proud would fome poor creatures be of fuch a conquest ! But I, alas ! I dont know how to receive as a favour, what I take to be fo infinitely my due. But what fhall I do to new mould him, Mademoifelle, for till then, he's my utter averfion ?

Mad. Matam, you muft laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de riticule all he fay, and all he do.

Lady Fan. Why truly fatire has ever been of wond'rous ufe to reform ill-manners. Befides, 'tis my particular talent to ridicule folks. I can be fevere, ftrangely fevere, when I will, Mademoifelle—Give me the pen and ink—I find myfelf whimfical—I'll write to him—Or I'll let it alone, and be fevere upon him that way. [*Sitting down to write, rifing up again.*]—Yet active feverity is better than paffive.—[*Sitting down.*]—'Tis as good to let it alone too ; for every lafh I give him, perhaps he'll take for a favour.—[*Rifing.*] Yet 'tis a thoufand pities fo much fatire fhould be loft. [*Sitting.*]—But if it fhould have a wrong effect upon him, 'twould diftract me. [*Rifing.*]—Well, I muft write though after all. [*Sitting.*]—Or I'll let it alone, which is the fame thing.

[*Rifing.*

Mad. La voilà déterminée.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE opens. *Sir John, Lady Brute, and Belinda, rising from the table.*

SIR JOHN.

HERE; take away the things: I expect company.
But first bring me a pipe: I'll smoke.

[*To a Servant.*]

Lady Brute. Lord, Sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty custom.

Sir John. Pr'ythee, don't be impertinent.

Bel. [*To Lady Brute.*] I wonder who those are he expects this afternoon.

Lady Brute. I'd give the world to know. Perhaps 'tis Constant, he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I'm resolved I'll share the visit.

Bel. We'll send for our work, and sit here.

Lady Brute. He'll choak us with his tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choak us when we are doing what we have a mind to. Lovewell.

Enter Lovewell.

Love. Madam.

Lady Brute. Here; bring my cousin's work and mine hither. [*Exit Lov. and re-enters with their work.*]

Sir John. Why, pox, can't you work somewhere else?

Lady Brute. We shall be careful not to disturb you, Sir.

Bel. Your pipe would make you too thoughtful, uncle, if you were left alone; our prittle prattle will cure your spleen.

Sir John. Will it so, Mrs. Pert! Now I believe it will so increase it, [*Sitting and smoking.*] I shall take my own house for a paper-mill.

Lady Brute. [*To Bel. aside.*] Don't let's mind him; let him say what he will.

Sir John. A woman's tongue a cure for the spleen—'oons—[*Aside.*] If a man had got the head-ach, they'd be for applying the same remedy.

Lady Brute. You have done a great deal, Belinda, since yesterday.

C

Bel.

Bel. Yes, I have worked very hard ; how do you like it ?

Lady Brute. Oh ! 'tis the prettiest fringe in the world. Well, cousin, you have the happiest fancy ; pr'ythee advise me about altering my crimson petticoat.

Sir John. A pox o' your petticoat ; here's such a prating, a man can't digest his own thoughts for you.

Lady Brute. Don't answer him. [*Aside.*] Well, what do you advise me ?

Bel. Why, really, I would not alter it at all. Methinks, 'tis very pretty as it is.

Lady Brute. Ay, that's true : but you know one grows weary of the prettiest things in the world when one has had them long.

Sir John. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. Shall we provoke him a little ?

Lady Brute. With all my heart. Belinda, don't you long to be married ?

Bel. Why, there are some things in it which I could like well enough.

Lady Brute. What do you think you should dislike ?

Bel. My husband, a hundred to one else.

Lady Brute. Oh, ye wicked wretch ! Sure you don't speak as you think ?

Bel. Yes, I do : especially if he smoked tobacco.

[*Sir John looks earnestly at them.*]

Lady Brute. Why, that many times takes off worse smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

Lady Brute. So some men will, to keep their wives from coming near them.

Bel. Then those wives should cuckold them at a distance.

[*He rises in a fury, throws his pipe at them, and drives them out. As they run off, Constant and Heartfree enter. Lady Brute runs against Constant.*]

Sir John. 'Oons, get you gone up stairs, you confederating strumpets you, or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance.

Lady Brute. Oh, lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us. Dear, dear Mr. Constant, save us. [*Exeunt.*]

Sir John. I'll cuckold you, with a pox.

Const. Heav'n ! Sir John, what's the matter !

Sir John. Sure if women had been ready created, the devil, instead of being kicked down into hell, had been married.

Heart. Why, what new plagues have you found now?

Sir John. Why these two gentlewomen did but hear me say I expected you here this afternoon; upon which, they presently resolved to take up the room, o' purpose to plague me and my friends.

Const. Was that all? Why we should have been glad of their company.

Sir John. Then I should have been weary of yours; for I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoking tobacco too; and said men stunk. But I have a good mind—to say something.

Const. No, nothing against the ladies, pray.

Sir John. Split the ladies. Come, will you sit down? Give us some wine, fellow. You won't smoke!

Const. No, nor drink neither, at this time, I must ask your pardon.

Sir John. What, this mistress of yours runs in your head! I'll warrant it's some such squeamish minx as my wife, that's grown so dainty of late, she finds fault even with a dirty shirt.

Heart. That a woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir John. 'Pox o' the women, let's drink.' Come you shall take one glass, though I send for a box of lozenges to sweeten your mouth after it.

Const. Nay, if one glass will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that expence.

Sir John. Why that's honest. Fill some wine, firrah. So here's to you, gentlemen—A wife's the devil. To your both being married. [They drink.]

Heart. Oh, your most humble servant, Sir.

Sir John. Well, how do you like my wine?

Const. 'Tis very good, indeed.

Heart. 'Tis admirable.

Sir John. Then give us t'other glass.

Const. No, pray excuse us now: we'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir John. This one glass, and no more. Come, it shall be

be your mistress's health ; and that's a great compliment from me, I assure you.

Const. And 'tis a very obliging one to me : so give us the glasses.

Sir John. So—let her live.

[*Sir John coughs in the glass.*]

Heart. And be kind.

Const. What's the matter ? Does it go the wrong way ?

Sir John. If I had love enough to be jealous, I should take this for an ill omen : for I never drank my wife's health in my life, but I puked in my glass.

Const. Oh, she's too virtuous to make any reasonable man jealous.

Sir John. Pox of her virtue. If I could catch her adulterating, I might be divorc'd from her by law.

Heart. And so pay her a yearly pension, to be a distinguished cuckold.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's my Lord Rake, Colonel Bully, and some other gentlemen at the Blue Posts, desire your company.

Sir John. Gad so, we are to consult about playing the devil to-night.

Heart. Well, we won't hinder business.

Sir John. Methinks, I don't know how to leave you two ; but for once I must make bold. Or, look you ; may be the conference mayn't last long ! So if you'll wait here half an hour, or an hour ; if I don't come then—why then—I won't come at all.

Heart. [*To Const.*] A good modest proposition, truly.

[*Aside.*]

Const. But let's accept on't, however. Who knows what may happen.

Heart. Well, Sir, to shew you how fond we are of your company, we'll expect your return as long as we can.

Sir John. Nay, may be I mayn't stay at all ; but business, you know, must be done. So your servant—Or, hark you, if you have a mind to take a frisk with us, I have an interest with my Lord ; I can easily introduce you.

Const.

Const. We are much beholden to you; but for my part, I'm engaged another way.

Sir John. What! to your mistress, I'll warrant. Pr'ythee, leave your nasty punk to entertain herself with her own wicked thoughts, and make one with us to-night.

Const. Sir, 'tis business that is to employ me.

Heart. And me; and business must be done, you know.

Sir John. Ay, women's business, though the world were consumed for it.

[*Exit Sir John.*]

Const. Farewel, beast; and now, my dear friend, would my mistress be but as complaisant as some men's wives, who think it a piece of good-breeding to receive the visits of their husband's friends in his absence.

Heart. Why, for your sake, I could forgive her, 'tho' she should be so complaisant to receive something else 'in his absence.' But what way shall we invent to see her?

Const. Oh, ne'er hope it: invention will prove as vain as wishes.

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

Heart. What do you think now, friend?

Const. I think I shall swoon.

Heart. I'll speak first then, whilst you fetch breath.

Lady Brute. We think ourselves obliged, gentlemen, to come and return you thanks for your knight-errantry. We were just upon being devoured by the fiery dragon.

Bel. Did not his fumes almost knock you down, gentlemen?

Heart. Truly, ladies, we did undergo some hardships; and should have done more, if some greater heroes than ourselves, hard by, had not diverted him.

Const. Though I am glad of the service you are pleased to say we have done you, yet I'm sorry we could do it in no other way, than by making ourselves privy to what you would perhaps have kept a secret.

Bel. For Sir John's part, I suppose he designed it no secret, since he made so much noise. And for myself, truly I'm not much concerned, since 'tis fallen only into this gentleman's hands and yours; who, I have many reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report any thing to my disadvantage.

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Const. Your good opinion, Madam, was what I feared I never could have merited.

Lady Brute. Your fears were vain then, Sir; for I'm just to every body.

Heart. Pr'ythee, Constant, what is't you do to get the ladies' good opinions; for I'm a novice at it?

Bel. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

Heart. Yes, that I will, with all my soul, Madam.

Bel. Why then, you must never be a sloven; never be out of humour, never smoke tobacco, nor drink but when you are dry.

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Nay, if you take his bottle from him, you break his heart, Madam.

Bel. Why, is it possible the gentleman can love drinking?

Heart. Only by way of antidote.

Bel. Against what, pray?

Heart. Against love, Madam.

Lady Brute. Are you afraid of being in love, Sir?

Heart. I should, if there were any danger of it.

Lady Brute. Pray, why so?

Heart. Because I always had an aversion to being used like a dog.

Bel. Why, truly, men in love are seldom used better.

Lady Brute. But was you never in love, Sir?

Heart. No, I thank Heaven, Madam.

Bel. Pray, where got you your learning then?

Heart. From other people's expence.

Bel. That's being a spunger, Sir, which is scarce honest: if you'd buy some expence with your own money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

Enter Footman.

Foot. Madam, here's my Lady Fancyful, to wait upon your Ladyship.

Lady Brute. Shield me, kind Heaven! What an inundation of impertinence is here coming upon us!

Enter Lady Fancyful, who runs first to Lady Brute, then to Belinda, kissing them.

Lady Fan. My dear Lady Brute, and sweet Belinda, methinks, 'tis an age since I saw you.

Lady

Lady Brute. Yet 'tis but three days; sure you have passed your time very ill, it seems so long to you.

Lady Fan. Why really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen, that, were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and mankind easy. What think you on't, Mr. Heartfree? for I take you to be my faithful adviser.

Heart. Why, truly, Madam,—I think—every project that is for the good of mankind, ought to be encouraged.

Lady Fan. Then I have your consent, Sir?

Heart. To do whatever you please, Madam.

Lady Fan. You had a much more limited complaisance this morning, Sir. Would you believe it, ladies? the gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty faults, in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of them.

Const. Why truly, Madam, my friend there is apt to be something familiar with the ladies.

Lady Fan. He is indeed, Sir; but he's wondrous charitable with it: he has had the goodness to design a reformation, e'en down to my fingers' ends.—'Twas thus, I think, Sir, [*Opening her fingers in an awkward manner.*] you'd have them stand—My eyes too he did not like: how was't you would have directed them? Thus I think. [*Staring at him.*—Then there was something amiss in my gait too: I don't know well how 'twas! but as I take it, he would have me walk like him. Pray, Sir, do me the favour, to take a turn or two about the room, that the company may see you—He's fullen, ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas much about this figure in general, he would have moulded me to: but I was an obstinate woman, and could not resolve to make myself mistress of his heart, by growing as awkward as his fancy.

[*She walks awkwardly about, staring and looking ungainly, then changes on a sudden to the extremity of her usual affectation.*]

Heart. Just thus women do, when they think we are in love with them, or when they are so with us.

[*Here Constant and Lady Brute talk together apart.*
Lady

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Lady Fan. 'Twould, however, be less vanity for me to conclude the former, than you the latter, Sir.

Heart. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude, is, that if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

Lady Fan. Not by over-fondness, upon my word, Sir. But, pr'ythee, let's stop here; for you are so much governed by instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Now am I sure she's fond of him. I'll try to make her jealous. Well, for my part, I should be glad to find somebody would be so free with me, that I might know my faults, and mend them.

Lady Fan. Then, pray, let me recommend this gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be surety for him, that upon a very limited encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended impudence on his.

Heart. I thank you, Madam, for your recommendation: but, hating idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a place where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your Ladyship, because I knew you would find me constant employment.

Lady Fan. I told you he'd be rude, Belinda.

Bel. Oh, a little bluntness is a sign of honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it. So, Sir, if you have no other objections to my service, but the fear of being idle in it, you may venture to list yourself: I shall find you work, I warrant you.

Heart. Upon those terms I engage, Madam; and this, with your leave, I take for earnest.

[*Offering to kiss her hand.*]

Bel. Hold there, Sir; I'm none of your earnest givers. But if I'm well served, I give good wages, and pay punctually.

[*Heart. and Bel. seem to continue talking familiarly.*]

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] I don't like this jesting between them. Methinks the fool begins to look as if he were in earnest—but then he must be a fool indeed. Lard, what a difference there is between me and her! [*Looking at Bel. scornfully.*] How I should despise such a thing, if I were a man!—What a nose she has—What a chin—What a neck—Then her eyes—And the worst kissing lips

In the universe——No, no, he never can like her, that's positive——Yet I can't suffer them together, any longer. Mr. Heartfree, do you know, that you and I must have no quarrel, for all this? I can't forbear being a little severe now and then; but women, you know, may be allowed any thing.

Heart. Up to a certain age, Madam.

Lady Fan. Which I'm not yet past, I hope.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Nor never will, I dare swear.

Lady Fan. [*To Lady Brute.*] Come, Madam, will your Ladyship be witness to our reconciliation?

Lady Brute. You are agreed then at last.

Heart. [*Slightingly.*] We forgive.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] That was a cold, ill-natured reply.

Lady Brute. Then there's no challenges sent between you?

Heart. Not from me, I promise. [*Aside to Const.*] But that's more than I'll do for her; for I know she can as well be hanged as forbear writing to me.

Const. That I believe. But I think we had best be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heart. With all my heart.

Const. Ladies, we are your humble servants. I see Sir John is quite engaged; 'twould be in vain to expect him. Come, Heartfree. [*Exit.*]

Heart. Ladies, your servant. [*To Belinda.*] I hope, Madam, you won't forget our bargain; I'm to say what I please to you.

Bel. Liberty of speech entire, Sir. [*Exit Heart.*]

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Very pretty, truly!——But how the blockhead went out languishing at her, and not a look towards me. Well, people may talk, but miracles are not ceased: for 'tis more than natural, such a rude fellow as he, and such a little impertinent as she, should be capable of making a woman of my sphere uneasy. But I can bear her sight no longer. Methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet. I must home, and study revenge. [*To Lady Brute.*] Madam, your humble servant; I must take my leave.

Lady Brute. What, going already, Madam?

Lady Fan. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really, I have eighteen visits to return this afternoon—
So,

So, you see I'm importuned by the women, as well as the men.

Bel. [*Aside.*] And she's quits with them both.

Lady Fan. [*Going.*] Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.

Lady Brute. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.

Lady Fan. No, sweet Lady Brute; you know I swoon at ceremony.

Lady Brute. Pray, give me leave.

Lady Fan. You know I won't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I must.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed you shan't. [*Exit Lady Fan. running; they follow.*]

Re-enter Lady Brute.

Lady Brute. This impertinent woman has put me out of humour for a fortnight. What an agreeable moment has her foolish visit interrupted! Lord, what a pleasure there is in doing what we should not do!

Re-enter Constant.

Ha! here again!

Const. Tho' the renewing my visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your pardon for it, Madam, when you know I only left the room, lest the lady who was here should have been as malicious in her remarks, as she is foolish in her conduct.

Lady Brute. He who has discretion enough to be tender of a woman's reputation, carries a virtue about him that may atone for a great many faults.

Const. If it has a title to atone for any, its pretensions must needs be strongest, where the crime is love. 'I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the attempt I have made upon your heart, since the enterprize has been a secret to all the world but yourself.

' *Lady Brute.* Secrecy, indeed, in sins of this kind, is an argument of weight to lessen the punishment; but nothing's a plea for a pardon entire, without a sincere repentance.

' *Const.* If sincerity in repentance consists in sorrow for offending,

'offending, no cloister ever inclosed so true a penitent as I should be. But I hope it can't be reckoned an offence to love, where it is a duty to adore.'

Lady Brute. 'Tis an offence, a great one, where it would rob a woman of all she ought to be adored for, her virtue.

Const. Virtue! that phantom of honour, which men in every age have so condemned; they have thrown it amongst the women to scramble for.

Lady Brute. If it be a thing of so very little value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your wives and daughters?

Const. We recommend it to our wives, Madam, because we would keep them to ourselves; and to our daughters, because we would dispose of them to others.

Lady Brute. 'Tis then of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of them without it.

Const. That importance, Madam, lies in the humour of the country, not in the nature of the thing. Pray, what does your Ladyship think of a powdered coat for deep mourning?

Lady Brute. I think, Sir, your sophistry has all the effect that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Const. I'm sorry for it.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Const. Pray, why?

Lady Brute. Because if you expected more from it, you have a worse opinion of my understanding than I desire you should have.

Const. [*Aside.*] I comprehend her: she would have me set a value upon her chastity, that I might think myself the more obliged to her, when she makes me a present of it. [*To her.*] I beg you will believe I did but railly, Madam: 'I know you judge too well of right and wrong, to be deceived by arguments like those.' And I hope you will have so favourable an opinion of my understanding too, to believe the thing called virtue has worth enough with me, to pass for an eternal obligation where'er 'tis sacrificed.

Lady Brute. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Const.

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Const. Yes ; the making the man you love your everlasting debtor.

Lady Brute. When debtors once have borrowed all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow shy of their creditor's company.

Const. That, Madam, is only when they are forced to borrow of usurers, and not of a generous friend. Let us chuse our creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful as to shun them.

Lady Brute. What think you of Sir John, Sir ? I was his free choice.

Const. I think he's married, Madam.

Lady Brute. Does marriage then exclude men from your rule of constancy ?

Const. It does. Constancy's a brave, free, haughty, generous agent, that cannot buckle to the chains of wedlock.

Lady Brute. Have you no exceptions to this general rule, as well as to t'other ?

Const. Yes, I would, after all, be an exception to it myself, if you were free in power and will to make me so.

Lady Brute. Compliments are well placed, where 'tis impossible to lay hold on them.

Const. I would to Heaven 'twere possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see 'tis no compliment at all. But since you are already disposed of, beyond redemption, to one who does not know the value of the jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you would not think him greatly wronged, tho' it should sometimes be looked on by a friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

Lady Brute. If looking on't alone would serve his turn, the wrong, perhaps, might not be very great.

Const. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good security to bring it home again at night ?

Lady Brute. Small security, I fancy, might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Const. Then where's the injury to the owner ?

Lady Brute. 'Tis an injury to him, if he thinks it
one.

' one. For if happiness be seated in the mind, unhappiness must be so too.

' *Const.* Here I close with you, Madam, and draw my conclusive argument from your own position. If the injury lie in the fancy, there needs nothing but secrecy to prevent the wrong.

' *Lady Brute.* [*Going.*] A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more arguments in its behalf.

' *Const.* [*Following her.*] But, Madam —

Lady Brute. But, Sir, 'tis my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a visit.

Const. [*Catching her hand.*] By Heaven, you shall not stir, till you give me hopes that I shall see you again, at some more convenient time and place.

Lady Brute. I give you just hopes enough—[*Breaking from him.*] to get looie from you; and that's all I can afford you at this time.

[*Exit running.*]

Const. Now, by all that's great and good, she's a charming woman! In what ecstasy of joy she has left me! for she gave me hope. Did she not say she gave me hope? Hope! ay; what hope?—Enough to make me let her go—Why, that's enough in conscience. Or—no matter how 'twas spoke; hope was the word, it came from her, and it was said to me.

Enter Heartfree.

Ha, Heartfree! Thou hast done me noble service in prattling to the young gentlewoman without there—Come to my arms, thou venerable bawd, and let me squeeze thee [*Embracing him eagerly.*] as a new pair of stays does a fat country girl, when she's carried to court, to stand for a maid of honour.

Heart. Why, what the devil's all this rapture for?

Const. Rapture! There's ground for rapture, man; there's hopes, my Heartfree; hopes, my friend.

Heart. Hopes! Of what?

Const. Why, hopes, that my Lady and I together, (for 'tis more than one body's work) should make Sir John a cuckold.

Heartf. Pr'ythee, what did she say to thee?

Const. Say! What did she not say? She said that—says she—she said—Zoons! I don't know what she said; but she looked as if she said every thing I'd have her; and

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so, if thou'lt go to the tavern, I'll treat thee with any thing that gold can buy ; I'll give all my silver among the drawers, make a bonfire before the door, ; swear that the Pope's turned protestant, and that all the politicians in England are of one mind. *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E *opens.* Lord Rake, Sir John, &c. at a table, drinking.

All. Huzza !

Lord Rake. Come, boys, charge again—So—Confusion to all order. Here's liberty of conscience.

All. Huzza !

Lord Rake. Come, sing the song I made this morning, to this purpose.

Sir John. 'Tis wicked, I hope.

Lord Rake. Don't I tell you that I made it ?

Sir John. My Lord, I beg your pardon, for suspecting you of any virtue. Come, begin.

S O N G, by Col. BULLY.

I.

We're gayly yet, we're gayly yet,
And we're not very fu', but we're gayly yet.
Then sit ye a while, and tipples a bit,
For we's not very fu', but we're gayly yet.
And we're gayly yet, &c. &c.

II.

There was a lad, and they ca'd him Dicky ;
He ga' me a kifs, and I bit his lippy,
Then under my apron he shew'd me a trick :
And we's not very fu', but we're gayly yet.
And we're gayly yet, &c. &c.

III.

There were three lads, and they were clad ;
There were three lasses, and them they had.
Three trees in the orchard are newly sprung,
And we's a' get geer enough, we're but young.
And we're gayly yet, &c. &c.

IV. Then

IV.

Then up went Ailey, Ailey, up went Ailey now :

'Then up went Ailey, quo' Crumma, we's a' get roaring fu'.

And one was kifs'd in the barn, another was kifs'd on the green,

And t'other behind the pease-stack, till the mow flew up to her eyn.

Then up went Ailey, Ailey, &c. &c.

V.

Now, fie, John Thompson, run,

Gin ever ye run in your life,

Deel get ye; but hye, my dear Jack,

There's a mon got to bed with your wife.

Then up went Ailey, Ailey, &c. &c.

VI.

Then away John Thompson ran,

And, 'egad, he ran with speed;

But before he had run his length,

The false loon had done the deed.

Then up went Ailey, Ailey, &c. &c.

' *Lord Rake.* Well, how do you like it, gentlemen?

' *All.* Oh, admirable!

' *Sir John.* I would not give a fig for a song that is not full of sin and impudence.

' *Lord Rake.* Then my muse is to your taste. But 'drink away; the night steals upon us; we shall want 'time to be lewd in.' Hey, page! fally out, firrah, and see what's doing in the camp; we'll beat up their quarters presently.

Page. I'll bring your Lordship an exact account.

[*Exit Page.*]

Lord Rake. 'Now let the spirit of Clary go round. 'Here's to our forlorn hope.' Courage, Knight! Victory attends you.

Sir John. And laurels shall crown me. Drink away, and be damn'd.

Lord Rake. Again, boys ; t'other glafs, and no morality.

Sir John. [*Drunk.*] Ay, no morality—and damn the watch, and let the constable be married.

All. Huzza !

Re-enter Page.

Lord Rake. How are the streets inhabited, firrah ?

Page. My Lord, it's Sunday night, they are full of drunken citizens.

Lord Rake. Along, then, boys ; we shall have a feast.

Col. Bully. Along, noble Knight.

Sir John. Ay, along, Bully ; and he that says Sir John Brute is not as drunk and as religious as the drunkenest citizen of them all—is a liar, and the son of a where.

Col. Bully. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a free-born Englishman.

Sir John. What's that to you, Sir, whether I am an Englishman or a Frenchman ?

Col. Bully. Zoons ! you are not angry, Sir ?

Sir John. Zoons ! I am angry, Sir—for if I am a free-born Englishman, what have you to do, even to talk of my privileges ?

Lord Rake. Why, pr'ythee, Knight, don't quarrel here : leave private animosities to be decided by daylight ; let the night be employed against the public enemy.

Sir John. My Lord, I respect you, because you are a man of quality. But I'll make that fellow know, I am within a hair's breadth as absolute by my privileges, as the King of France is by his prerogative. He, by his prerogative, takes money where it is not his due ; I, by my privilege, refuse paying it where I owe it. Liberty and property, and old England. Huzza !

All. Huzza ! [*Exit Sir John, reeling, all following him.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

THE PROVOK'D WIFE.

42

A C T IV.

SCENE, a Bed-chamber.

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

LADY BRUTE.

SURE it's late, Belinda; I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

Lady Brute. To bed, my dear! And by that time I am fallen into a sweet sleep, (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better). Sir John will come home roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed.

Bel. Oh, you need not fear him! he's in for all night. The servants say he's gone to drink with my Lord Rake.

Lady Brute. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable company should part presently. What hogs men are, Belinda, when they grow weary of women!

Bel. And what owls they are, whilst they are fond of them!

Lady Brute. But that we may forgive well enough, because they are so upon our accounts. But, pr'ythee, one word of poor Constant 'before we go to bed, if it be but 'to furnish matter for dreams.' I dare swear he's talking of me now, or thinking of me at least.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleased to 'make him a good round advance to-day, Madam.

Lady Brute. Why, I have e'en plagu'd him enough 'to satisfy any reasonable woman. He has besieged me 'these two years, to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieged you two years more, he'd 'be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you 'at last.

Lady Brute. That may be; but I'm afraid the town 'won't be able to hold out much longer: for, to confess 'the truth to you, Belinda, the garrison begins to grow 'mutinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate, the better.

Lady Brute. Yet, methinks, I would fain stay a little 'longer, to see you fixed too, that we might start together, and see who could love longest.' What think you, if Mr. Heartfree should have a month's mind to you.

D 3

Bel.

Bel. Why, I could almost be in love with him, for despising that foolish, affected Lady Fancyful. 'But I'm
' afraid he's too cold, ever to warm himself by my fire.

' *Lady Brute.* Then he deserves to be frozen to death.
' Would I were a man for your sake, dear rogue !

[*Kissing her.*

' *Bel.* You'd wish yourself a woman for your own, or
' men are mistaken. But if I could make a conquest of
' this son of Bacchus, and rival his bottle, what should I
' do with him? He has no fortune; I can't marry him;
' and sure you would not have me do I don't know what
' with him.

' *Lady Brute.* Why, if you did, child, 'twould be but
' a good friendly part, if 'twere only to keep me in coun-
' tenance, whilst I play the fool with Constant.

' *Bel.* Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I
' may, perhaps, some other, as much to your satisfaction.
But, pray, how shall we contrive to see these blades again
quickly ?

Lady Brute. We must e'en have recourse to the old
way; make them an appointment 'twixt jest and earnest:
'twill look like a frolic, and that, you know, is a very
good thing to save a woman's blushes.

Bel. You advise well. But where shall it be ?

Lady Brute. In Spring-garden. But they shan't know
their women, till they pull off their masks; for a surprise
is the most agreeable thing in the world: 'and I find my-
' self in a very good humour, ready to do them any good
' turn I can think on.'

Bel. Then, pray, write them the necessary billet with-
out farther delay.

Lady Brute. Let's go into your chamber, then; and
whilst you undress I'll do it, child. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Covent-Garden.

Enter Lord Rake, Sir John, &c. with swords drawn.

Lord Rake. Is the dog dead ?

Col. Bully. No, damn him, I heard him wheeze.

Lord Rake. How the witch his wife howled !

Col. Bully. Ay; she'll alarm the watch presently.

Lord Rake. Appear, Knight, then. Come, you have a
good cause to fight for; there's a man murdered.

Sir

THE PROVOK'D WIFE. 43

Sir John. Is there? Then let his ghost be satisfied; for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Taylor, with a bundle under his arm.

Col. Bully. How now? What have we got here? A thief?

Tay. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Lord Rake. That we'll see presently. Here, let the General examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pounds I find him guilty in spite of his teeth—for he looks like a—sneaking rascal. Come, firrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them I shall guess at your morals.

Tay. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman woman's taylor.

Sir John. Then, firrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade: and so, that your punishments may be suitable to your crimes, I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tay. Pray, good, worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me. Indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, tho' I say it, that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, firrah; but attend your fate.

Lord Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tay. An't please you, it's my Lady's short cloak and wrapping gown.

Sir John. What Lady, you reptile you?

Tay. My Lady Brute, an't please your honour.

Sir John. My Lady Brute! my wife! the robe of my wife!—With reverence let me approach it. The dear angel is always taking care of me in danger, and has sent me this suit of armour to protect me in this day of battle. On they go.

All. Oh, brave Knight!

Lord Rake. Live, Don Quixote the second!

Sir John. Sancho, my 'squire, help me on with my armour.

Tay. Oh, dear gentlemen! I shall be quite undone, if you take the sack.

Sir

Sir John. Retire, firrah; and since you carry off your kin, go home, and be happy. So, how d'ye like my shapes now?

Lord Rake. To a miracle! He looks like a Queen of the Amazons. But, to your arms, gentlemen—The enemy's upon the march—here's the watch—

Sir John. Oons! if it were Alexander the Great, at the head of his army, I would drive him into a horse-pond.

All. Huzza! Oh, brave Knight!

Enter Watchmen.

Sir John. See, here he comes, with all his Greeks about him. Follow me, boys.

Watch. Hey-day! Who have we got here? Stand.

Sir John. May-hap not.

Watch. What are you all doing here in the streets, at this time o' night? And who are you, Madam, that seems to be at the head of this noble crew?

Sir John. Sirrah, I am Bonduca, Queen of the Welchmen; and with a leek as long as my pedigree, I will destroy your Roman legions in an instant. Britons, strike home.

[Snatches a Watchman's staff, strikes at the Watch, and falls down; his party drove off.]

Watch. So; we have got the Queen, however. We'll make her pay well for her ransom—Come, Madam, will your Majesty please to walk before the constable?

Sir John. The constable's a rascal, and you are a son of a whore.

Watch. A most noble reply, truly! If this be her royal stile, I'll warrant her maids of honour prattle prettily. But we'll teach you some of our court dialect, before we part with you, Princess. Away with her to the round-house.

Sir John. Hands off, you ruffians! My honour's dearer to me than my life. I hope you won't be uncivil.

Watch. Away with her.

[Exeunt.]

S C E N E, a Bed-chamber.

Enter Heartfree.

Heart. What the plague ails me?—Love! No, I thank you for that; my heart's rock still—Yet 'tis Belinda.

da that disturbs me, that's positive—Well, what of all that? Must I love her for being troublesome? At that rate I might love all the women I meet, 'egad. But hold; tho' I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me, because I love her—Ay, that may be, faith—I have dreamt of her, that's certain—Well, so I have of my mother: therefore, what's that to the purpose?—Ay, but Belinda runs in my mind waking; and so does many a damn'd thing, that I don't care a farthing for—Methinks, tho', I would fain be talking to her; and yet I have no business—Well, am I the first man that has had a mind to do an impertinent thing?

Enter Constant.

Const. How now, Heartfree? What makes you up and dress'd so soon? I thought none but lovers quarrell'd with their beds. I expected to have found you snoring, as I used to do.

Heart. Why, faith, friend, 'tis the care I have of your affairs, that makes me so thoughtful: I have been studying all night how to bring your matter about with Belinda.

Const. With Belinda!

Heart. With my Lady, I mean: and faith I have mighty hopes on't. Sure you must be very well satisfied with her behaviour to you yesterday.

Const. So well, that nothing but a lover's fears can make me doubt of success. But what can this sudden change proceed from?

Heart. Why, you saw her husband beat her, did you not?

Const. That's true: a husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his wife. Methinks she should e'en have cuckolded him upon the spot, to shew that after the battle she was master of the field.

Heart. A council of war of women would infallibly have advis'd her to it. But, I confess, so agreeable a woman as Belinda deserves better usage.

Const. Belinda again!

Heart. My Lady, I mean. What a pox makes me blunder so to-day? [*Aside.*] A plague of this treacherous tongue!

Const. Pr'ythee, look upon me seriously, Heartfree—
Now,

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Now, answer me directly : is it my Lady, or Belinda, employs your careful thoughts thus ?

Heart. My, Lady, or Belinda !

Const. In love, by this light ; in love.

Heart. In love !

Const. Nay, ne'er deny it ; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the jest fit heavier about thee. My dear friend, I give you much joy.

Heart. Why, pr'ythee, you won't persuade me to it, will you ?

Const. That she's mistress of your tongue, that's plain ; and I know you are so honest a fellow, your tongue and heart always go together. But how—but how the devil—Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !

Heart. Hey-day ! Why, sure you don't believe it in earnest ?

Const. Yes, I do ; because I see you deny it in jest.

Heart. Nay, but look you, Ned—a—deny in jest—a—gadzooks, you know I say—a—when a man denies a thing in jest—a——

Const. Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !

Heart. Nay, then we shall have it. What, because a man stumbles at a word—Did you never make a blunder ?

Const. Yes ; for I am in love, I own it.

Heart. Then so am I——Now laugh, till thy soul's glutted with mirth. [*Embracing him.*] But, dear Constant, don't tell the town on't.

Const. Nay, then, 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a confession. ' But, tell us a little, Jack, ' by what new-invented arms has this mighty stroke been ' given ?

Heart. E'en by that unaccountable weapon called ' *je-ne-sçai-quoi* : for every thing that can come within ' the verge of beauty, I have seen it with indifference.

Const. So, in few words, then, the *je-ne-sçai-quoi* has ' been too hard for the quilted petticoat.

Heart. 'Egad, I think the *je-ne-sçai-quoi* is in the ' quilted petticoat ; at least, 'tis certain I never think on't ' without a *je-ne-sçai-quoi* in every part about me.

Const. Well, but have all your remedies lost their ' virtue ? Have you turned her inside out yet ?

Heart. I dare not so much as think on't.

Const.

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Const. But don't the two years fatigue I have had discourage you?

Heart. Yes; I dread what I foresee; yet cannot quit the enterprize: like some soldiers, whose courage dwells more in their honour than their nature, on they go, tho' the body trembles at what the soul makes it undertake.

Const. Nay, if you expect your mistress will use you as your profanations against her sex deserve, you tremble justly. But how do you intend to proceed, friend?

Heart. Thou know'st I am but a novice; be friendly, and advise me.

Const. Why, look you then; I'd have you serenade and a—write a song—Go to church; look like a fool; be very officious; ogle, write, and lead out: and who knows, but, in a year or two's time, you may be called a—troublesome puppy, and sent about your business.

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Yet thus it oft falls out with lovers, Sir.

Heart. Pox on me, for making one of the number.

Const. Have a care; say no saucy things; 'twill but augment your crime; and if your mistress hears on't, increase your punishment.

Heart. Pr'ythee, say something then, to encourage me; you know I helped you in your distress.

Const. Why then, to encourage you to perseverance, that you may be thoroughly ill used for your offences, I'll put you in mind, that even the coyest ladies of them all are made up of desires, as well as we; and tho' they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last: for that thundering engineer, nature, does make such havock in the town, they must surrender at long run, or perish in their own flames.'

Enter Footman.

Foot. Sir, there's a porter without with a letter; he desires to give it into your own hands.

Const. Call him in.

Enter Porter.

What, Joe! Is it thee?

Port. An't please you, Sir, I was ordered to deliver this into your own hands, by two well-shaped ladies, at
the

the New-Exchange. I was at your honour's lodgings, and your servants sent me hither.

Const. 'Tis well, are you to carry any answer?

Porter. No, my noble master. They gave me my orders, and, whip, they were gone, 'like a maidenhead at fifteen.'

Const. Very well; there. *[Gives him money.]*

Port. God bless your honour. *[Exit.]*

Const. Now let's see what honest, trusty Joe has brought us. *[Reads.]* "If you and your play-fellow can spare time from your business and devotions, don't fail to be at Spring-garden about eight in the evening. You'll find nothing there but women, so you need bring no other arms than what you usually carry about you."—So, play-fellow; here's something to stay your stomach, till your mistress's dish is ready for you.

Heart. Some of our old battered acquaintance. I won't go, not I.

Const. Nay, that you can't avoid; there's honour in the case; 'tis a challenge, and I want a second.

Heart. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you; for I'm so disheartened by this wound Belinda has given me, I don't think I shall have courage enough to draw my sword.

Const. Oh, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you'll find sword enough for such enemies as we have to deal withal. *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E, a Street.

Enter Constable and Watchmen with Sir John.

Const. Come, forsooth, come along, if you please. I once, in compassion, thought to have seen you safe home this morning; but you have been so rampant and abusive all night, I shall see what the Justice of Peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the Justice of Peace, firrah. *[Watchman knocks at the door.]*

Enter Servant.

Const. Is Mr. Justice at home?

Serv. Yes.

Const. Pray, acquaint his worship we have got an unruly woman here, and desire to know what he'll please to have done with her.

Scrv. I'll acquaint my master. [Exit.

Sir John. Hark you, Constable; what cuckoldy Justice is this?

Const. One that knows how to deal with such romps as you are, I'll warrant you.

Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what is the matter there?

Const. An't please your worship, this here comical sort of a gentlewoman has committed great outrages to-night. She has been frolicking with my Lord Rake and his gang; they attacked the watch, and I hear there has been a man killed: I believe 'tis they have done it.

Sir John. Sir, there may have been murder, for ought I know; and there may have been a rape too—that fellow would have ravished me.

2d Watch. Ravish! ravish! Oh, lud! Oh, lud! Oh, lud! ravish her! Why, please your worship, I heard Mr. Constable say, he believed she was little better than a maphrodite.

Just. Why, truly, she does seem a little masculine about the mouth.

2d Watch. Yes, and about the hands too, an't please your worship. I did but offer, in mere civility, to help her up the stairs into our apartment, and with her gripen fist, thus——

[*Sir John knocks him down.*]

Sir John. Ay, just so, Sir, I felled him to the ground like an ox.

Just. Out upon this boisterous woman! out upon her!

Sir John. Mr. Justice, he would have been uncivil: it was in defence of my honour, and I demand satisfaction.

2d Watch. I hope your worship will satisfy her honour in Bridewell. That fist of hers will make an admirable hemp-beater.

Sir John. Sir, I hope you will protect me against that libidinous rascal. I am a woman of quality, and virtue too, for all I am in an undress this morning.

Just. Why, she really has the air of a sort of a woman, a little somethingish out of the common. Madam, if you expect I should be favourable to you, I desire I may know who you are.

Sir John. Sir, I am any body, at your service.

Just. Lady, I desire to know your name.

E

Sir

Sir John. Sir, my name's Mary.

Just. Ay, but your surname, Madam.

Sir John. Sir, my surname's the very same with my husband's.

Just. A strange woman this! Who is your husband, pray?

Sir John. Sir John——

Just. Sir John who?

Sir John. Sir John Brute.

Just. Is it possible, Madam, you can be my Lady Brute?

Sir John. That happy woman, Sir, am I; only a little in my merriment to-night.

Just. I am concerned for Sir John.

Sir John. Truly, so am I.

Just. I have heard he's an honest gentleman.

Sir John. As ever drunk.

Just. Good lack! Indeed, Lady, I'm sorry he has such a wife.

Sir John. I am sorry he has any wife at all.

Just. And so perhaps may he—I doubt you have not given him a very good taste of matrimony.

Sir John. Taste, Sir! Sir, I have scorned to flint him to a taste, I have given him a full meal of it.

Just. Indeed, I believe so! But pray, fair Lady, may he have given you any occasion for this extraordinary conduct—Does he not use you well?

Sir John. A little upon the rough sometimes.

Just. Ay, any man may be out of humour now and then.

Sir John. Sir, I love peace and quiet, and when a woman don't find that at home, she's apt sometimes to comfort herself with a few innocent diversions abroad.

Just. I doubt he uses you but too well. Pray how does he as to that weighty thing, money? Does he allow you what is proper of that?

Sir John. Sir, I have generally enough to pay the reckoning, if this son of a whore of a drawer would but bring his bill.

Just. A strange woman this—Does he spend a reasonable portion of his time at home, to the comfort of his wife and children?

Sir John. He never gave his wife cause to repine at his being abroad in his life.

Just. Pray, Madam, how may he be in the grand matrimonial point.—Is he true to your bed?

Sir John. Chaste! 'Oons! This fellow asks so many impertinent questions! 'Egad, I believe it is the Justice's wife, in the Justice's clothes.

Just. 'Tis great pity he should have been thus disposed of. Pray, Madam, (and then I've done) what may be your Ladyship's common method of life? If I may presume so far.

Sir John. Why, Sir, much that of a woman of quality.

Just. Pray how may you generally pass your time, Madam? Your morning, for example.

Sir John. Sir, like a woman of quality:—I wake about two o'clock in the afternoon—I stretch—and make a sign for my chocolate—When I have drank three cups—I slide down again upon my back, with my arms over my head, while my two maids put on my stockings—Then hanging upon their shoulders, I am traile'd to my great chair, where I sit—and yawn—for my breakfast—If it don't come presently, I lie down upon my couch to say my prayers, while my maid reads me the play-bills.

Just. Very well, Madam.

Sir John. When the tea is brought in, I drink twelve regular dishes, with eight slices of bread and butter—And half an hour after, I send to the cock, to know if the dinner is almost ready.

Just. So, Madam!

Sir John. By that time my head is half drest, I hear my husband swearing himself into a state of perdition, that the meat's all cold upon the table; to amend which, I come down in an hour more, and have it sent back to the kitchen, to be all drest over again.

Just. Poor man!

Sir John. When I have dined, and my idle servants are presumptuously set down at their ease, to do so too, I call for my coach, to go visit fifty dear friends, of whom I hope I never shall find one at home, while I shall live.

Just. So! there's the morning and afternoon pretty well

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well disposed of—Pray now, Madam, how do you pass your evenings?

Sir John. Like a woman of spirit; a great spirit. Give me a box and dice—Seven's the main. Oons! Sir, I set you a hundred pound! Why, do you think women are married now a-days, to sit at home and mend napkins? Oh, the lord help your head!

Just. Mercy upon us, Mr. Constable! what will this age come to?

Const. What will it come to, indeed, if such women as these are not set in the stocks!

Sir John. Sir, I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Madam, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None—By my virtue.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge her.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle—

Just. I thank you kindly, Madam; but I never drink in a morning. Good-by-t'ye, Madam, good-by-t'ye.

Sir John. Good-by-t'ye, good Sir. [*Exit Justice.*] So—now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Const. No, thank you, Madam; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He, he, he, he, he—the fool is married then. Well, you won't go!

Const. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may go to the devil. [*Exit Sir John.*]

Const. [*Gazing after her.*] Why, God-a-mercy, Lady. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, Spring-Garden.

Constant and Heartfree cross the Stage. As they go off, enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle masked, and dogging them.

Const. So; I think we are about the time appointed. Let us walk up this way. [*Exeunt.*]

Lady Fan. Good: thus far I have dogged them without

out being discovered. 'Tis infallibly some intrigue that brings them to Spring-Garden. How my poor heart is torn and wrecked with fear and jealousy! Yet let it be any thing but that flirt Belinda, and I'll try to bear it. But if it proves her, all that's woman in me shall be employed to destroy her.

[Exit after Constant and Heartfree.

Re-enter Constant and Heartfree. Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle, still following at a distance.

Const. I see no females yet, that have any thing to say to us. I'm afraid we are bantered.

Heart. I wish we were; for I'm in no humour to make either them or myself merry.

Const. Nay, I'm sure you'll make them merry enough, if I tell them why you are dull. But, pr'ythee, why so heavy and sad before you begin to be ill-used?

Heart. For the same reason, perhaps, that you are so brisk and well-pleased; because both pains and pleasures are generally more considerable in prospect, than when they come to pass.

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda, masked, and poorly dressed.

Const. How now! who are these? Not our game, I hope.

Heart. If they are, we are e'en well enough served, to come a hunting here, when we had so much better game in chase elsewhere.

Lady Fan. [To Mademoiselle.] So, those are their ladies, without doubt. But I'm afraid that Doily stuff is not worne for want of better clothes. They are the very shape and size of Belinda and her aunt.

Mad. So dey be inteed, Madam.

Lady Fan. We'll slip into this close arbour, where we may hear all they say.

[Exeunt Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

Lady Brute. What, are you afraid of us, gentlemen?

Heart. Why, truly, I think we may, if appearance don't lie.

Bel. Do you always find women what they appear to be, Sir?

Heart. No, forsooth; but I seldom find them better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the outside's best, you think?

Heart. 'Tis the honestest.

Const. Have a care, Heartfree; you are relapsing again.

Lady Brute. Why, does the gentleman use to rail at women?

Const. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good call for't. They did not use you so well, as you thought you deserved, Sir?

Lady Brute. They made themselves merry, at your expence, Sir?

Bel. Laughed when you sighed?

Lady Brute. Slept while you were waking?

Bel. Had your porter beat?

Lady Brute. And threw your billet-doux in the fire?

Heart. Hey-day, I shall do more than rail, presently.

Bel. Why, you won't beat us, will you?

Heart. I don't know but I may.

Const. What the devil's coming here? Sir John—and drunk, i'faith.

Enter Sir John.

Sir John. What a pox——here's Constant, Heartfree—and two whores 'egad—Oh, you covetous rogues!—what have you never a spare punk for your friend?—But I'll share with you.

Heart. Why what the plague have you been doing, knight? *[He seizes both the women.]*

Sir John. Why, I have been beating the watch, and scandalizing the women of quality.

Heart. A very good account, truly.

Sir John. And what do you think I'll do next?

Const. Nay, that no man can guess.

Sir John. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat both your strumpets.

Lady Brute. *[Aside.]* Oh, lord! we're undone.

Heart. No, we can't sup together, because we have some affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our right to them.

Bel. *[Aside.]* Lord, what shall we do?

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Sir John. Let me see, their cloaths are such damned clothes, they won't pawn for the reckoning.

Heart. Sir John, your servant. Raptures attend you.

Const. Adieu, ladies, make much of the gentleman.

Lady Brute. Why sure you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken fellow to abuse us.

Sir John. Who do you call a drunken fellow, you slut you? I'm a man of quality; the king has made me a knight.

Heart. Aye, aye, you are in good hands; adieu, adieu.
[*Heartfree runs off.*]

Lady Brute. The devil's hands! Let me go, or I'll—
For Heaven's sake, protect us!

[*She breaks from him, runs to Constant, twitching off her mask, and clapping it on again.*]

Sir John. I'll devil you, you jade you.—I'll demolish your ugly face.

Re-enter Heartfree. Belinda runs to him, and shews her face.

Heart. Hold, thou mighty man! Look ye, Sir, we did but jest with you. These are ladies of our acquaintance that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir John. 'Oons, I won't leave you, not I.

Heart. Nay, but you must though; and therefore make no words on't.

Sir John. Then you are a couple of damned uncivil fellows. And I hope your punks will give you sauce to your mutton.
[*Exit Sir John.*]

Lady Brute. Oh, I shall never come to myself again, I'm so frightened!

Const. 'Tis a narrow escape, indeed.

Bel. Women must have frolicks, you see, whatever they cost them.

Heart. This might have proved a dear one though.

Lady Brute. You are the more obliged to us for the risk we run upon your accounts.

Const. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our knight-errantry, ladies. This is the second time we have delivered you.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true; and since we see fate has designed

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signed you for our guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust ourselves in your hands. But you must not have the worse opinion of us for our innocent frolick.

Heart. Ladies, you may command our opinions in every thing that is to your advantage.

Bel. Then, Sir, I command you to be of opinion, that women are sometimes better than they appear to be.

[*Lady Brute and Constant talk apart.*]

Heart. Madam, you have made a convert of me in every thing. I'm grown a fool. I could be fond of a woman.

Bel. I thank you, Sir, in the name of the whole sex.

Heart. Which sex nothing but yourself could ever have atoned for.

Bel. Now has my vanity a devilish itch to know in what my merit consists.

Heart. In your humility, Madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

Bel. One other compliment, with that serious face, and I hate you for ever after.

Heart. Some women love to be abused; is that it you would be at?

Bel. No, not that neither: but I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear, without putting them either to a real or an affected blush.

Heart. Why then, in as plain terms as I can find to express myself, I could love you even to matrimony itself almost, 'egad.

Bel. Just as Sir John did her Ladyship there—' What
' think you? Don't you believe one month's time might
' bring you down to the same indifference, only clad in
' a little better manners, perhaps? Well, you men are
' unaccountable things, mad till you have your mistresses,
' and then stark mad till you are rid of them again. Tell
' me honestly, is not your patience put to a much severer
' trial after possession than before?

Heart. With a great many, I must confess it is, to
' our eternal scandal; but I—dear creature, do but try
me.

Bel. That's the surest way, indeed, to know, but not
the safest. [*To Lady Brute.*] Madam, are not you for
taking

taking a turn in the great walk? It's almost dark, nobody will know us.

Lady Brute. Really I find myself something idle, Belinda: besides I doat upon this little odd private corner. But don't let my lazy fancy confine you.

Const. [*Aside.*] So, she would be left alone with me; that's well.

Bel. Well, we'll take one turn, and come to you again. [*To Heartfree.*] Come, Sir, shall we go pry into the secrets of the garden? Who knows what discoveries we may make.

Heart. Madam, I am at your service.

Const. [*To Heartf. aside.*] Don't make too much haste back; for, d'ye hear——'I may be busy.'

Heart. Enough. [*Exeunt Belinda and Heartfree.*]

Lady Brute. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr. Constant, I'm afraid I shall lose your good opinion of me.

Const. My good opinion, Madam, is like your cruelty, never to be removed.

Lady Brute. Indeed, I doubt you much; why, suppose you had a wife, and she should entertain a gallant?

Const. If I gave her just cause, how should I justly condemn her?

Lady Brute. Ah, but you differ widely about just causes.

Const. But blows can bear no dispute.

Lady Brute. Nor ill manners much, truly.

Const. Then no woman upon earth has so just a cause as you have.

Lady Brute. But can a husband's faults release my duty?

Const. In equity, without doubt. And where laws dispense with equity, equity should dispense with laws.

Lady Brute. Pray let us leave this dispute; for you men have as much witchcraft in your arguments, as women have in their eyes.

Const. But whilst you attack me with your charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

Lady Brute. The case is not the same. What mischief we do we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Const. Beauty soon obtains pardon for the pain that it gives, when it applies the balm of compassion to the wound: but a fine face and a hard heart is almost as bad

as

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‘ as an ugly face and a soft one ; both very troublesom^e
 ‘ to many a poor gentleman.

‘ *Lady Brute.* Yes, and to many a poor gentlewoman
 ‘ too, I can assure you. But pray which of them is it
 ‘ that most afflicts you ?

‘ *Const.* Your glass and conscience will inform you,
 ‘ Madam.’ But for Heaven’s sake, (for now I must be
 ferocious) if pity, or if gratitude can move you ; [*Taking*
her hand.] if constancy and truth have power to tempt
 you ; if love, if adoration can affect you, give me at least
 some hopes, that time may do, what you perhaps mean
 never to perform ; ’twill ease my sufferings, though not
 quench my flame.

Lady Brute. Your sufferings eased, your flame would
 soon abate ; and that I would preserve, not quench it,
 Sir.

Const. Would you preserve it, nourish it with favours ;
 for that’s the food it naturally requires.

Lady Brute. Yet on that natural food, ’twould surfeit
 soon, should I resolve to grant all you would ask.

Const. And in refusing all, you starve it. Forgive me
 therefore, since my hunger rages, if I at last grow wild,
 and in my frenzy force at least this from you. [*Kissing*
her hand.] Or if you’d have my flame soar higher still,
 then grant me this, and this, and thousands more ; [*Kiss-*
ing first her hand and then her neck.] for now’s the time
 she melts into compassion. [*Aside.*]

Lady Brute. Oh, heavens ! Let me go.

Const. Ay, go, ay : where shall we go, my charming
 angel——into this private arbour——Nay, let’s lose no
 time——moments are precious——

Lady Brute. And lovers wild. Pray let us stop here ;
 at least for this time.

Const. ’Tis impossible ; he that has power over you,
 can have none over himself.

[*As he is forcing her into the arbour, Lady Fancyful*
and Mademoiselle bolt upon them, and run over the
stage.]

Lady Brute. Ah ! I’m lost.

Lady Fan. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe.

Mad. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe.

Const. Death and furies, who are these ?

Lady

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Lady Brute. Oh, heavens! I'm out of my wits; if they know me, I am ruined.

Const. Don't be frightened: ten thousand to one they are strangers to you.

Lady Brute. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Const. Whither will you go?

Lady Brute. Home, as if the devil were in me. Lord, where's this Belinda now?

Enter Belinda and Heartfree.

Oh! 'tis well you are come; I'm so frightened, 'my hair stands an end.' Let's begone, for Heaven's sake.

Bel. Lord, what's the matter?

Lady Brute. The devil's the matter; here's a couple of women have done the most impertinent thing. Away, away, away, away, away, away. [*Exeunt running.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

LADY FANCYFUL.

WELL, Mademoiselle; did you dodge the filthy things?

Mad. Oh, qu' oui, Madame.

Lady Fan. And where are they?

Mad. Au logis.

Lady Fan. What, men and all?

Mad. Tous ensemble.

Lady Fan. Oh, confidence! What, carry their fellows to their own house!

Mad. C'est que le mari n'y est pas.

Lady Fan. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there, and quickly too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a prodigious thing, to see when men and women get together, how they fortify one another in their impudence. But if that drunken fool, her husband, be to be found in e'er a tavern in town, I'll send him amongst them; I'll spoil their sport.

Mad.

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Mad. En vérité, Madame, ce seroit dommage.

Lady Fan. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, Mademoiselle; therefore never go about it: for I am the steadiest creature in the world——when I have determined to do mischief, So come along. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Sir John Brute's House.*

Enter Constant, Heartfree, *Lady Brute*, Belinda, and Lovewell.

Lady Brute. But you are sure you don't mistake, Lovewell?

Love. Madam, I saw them all go into the tavern together, and my master so drunk he could scarce stand. [*Exit.*]

Lady Brute. Then, gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay, and play at cards with us an hour or two: for they'll scarce part till morning.

Bel. I think, 'tis pity they should ever part——

Const. The company that's here, Madam.

Lady Brute. Then, Sir, the company that's here must remember to part itself in time.

Const. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future favours, by an indiscreet usage of this. The moment you give us the signal, we shan't fail to make our retreat.

Lady Brute. Upon those conditions then let us sit down to cards.

Enter Lovewell.

Love. Oh, lord, Madam! here's my master just staggering in upon you: he has been quarrelsome yonder, and they have kicked him out of the company.

Lady Brute. Into the closet, gentlemen, for Heaven's sake; I'll wheedle him to-bed, if possible.

[*Const. and Heartf. run into the closet.*]

Enter Sir John, all dirt and bloody.

Lady Brute. Ah——Ah——he's all over blood.

Sir John. What the plague does the woman squall for? Did you never see a man in a pickle before?

Lady Brute. Lord, where have you been?

Sir John. I have been at——cuffs.

Lady Brute. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded.

Sir John. Sound as a roach, wife.

Lady

Lady Brute. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir John. You know—I think you lie.

Lady Brute. You do me wrong to think so. For Heaven's my witness, I had rather see my own blood trickle down, than yours.

Sir John. Then will I be sacrificed.

Lady Brute. 'Tis a hard fate I should not be believed.

Sir John. 'Tis a damned atheistical age, wife.

Lady Brute. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender proofs how great my care is of you. But, spite of all your cruel thoughts, I'll still persist, and at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down and sleep a little.

Sir John. Why—do you think I am drunk—you slut, you?

Lady Brute. Heaven forbid I should: but I'm afraid you are feverish. Pray, let me feel your pulse.

Sir John. Stand off, and be damned.

Lady Brute. Why, I see your distemper in your very eyes. You are all on fire. Pray, go to bed; let me intreat you.

Sir John.—Come, kiss me, then.

Lady Brute. [*Kissing him.*] There: now go. [*Aside.*] He stinks like poison.

Sir John. I see it goes damnably against your stomach.—and therefore—kiss me again.

Lady Brute. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir John. Do't, I say.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Ah, lord have mercy upon me. Well; there: now will you go?

Sir John. Now, wife, you shall see my gratitude. You gave me two kisses—I'll give you—two hundred.

[*Kisses and tumbles her.*]

Lady Brute. Oh, lord! pray, Sir John, be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in!

Bel. [*Aside.*] If I were in her pickle, I'd call my 'gallant out of the closet, and he should cudgel him 'foundly.'

Sir John. So, now you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together. But first I must have a cup of your cold tea, wife.

[*Going to the closet.*]

F

Lady

L. B. Oh, I'm ruin'd! There's none there, my dear.

Sir John. I'll warrant you, I'll find some, my dear.

Lady Brute. You can't open the door, the lock's spoiled; I have been turning and turning the key this half hour to no purpose. I'll send for the smith to-morrow.

Sir John. There's ne'er a smith in Europe can open a door with more expedition than I can do—As for example—Pou. [*He bursts open the door with his foot.*—How now! What the devil have we got here?—Constant—Heartfree—and two whores again, 'egad—This is the worst cold tea—that ever I met with in my life—

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Oh, lord, what will become of us?

Sir John. Gentlemen—I am your very humble servant—I give you many thanks—I see you take care of my family—I shall do all I can to return the obligation.

Const. Sir, how oddly soever this business may appear to you, you'd have no cause to be uneasy, if you knew the truth of all things? Your Lady is the most virtuous woman in the world, and nothing has past, but an innocent frolick.

Heart. Nothing else, upon my honour, Sir.

Sir John. You are both very civil gentlemen—And my wife there, is a very civil gentlewoman; therefore I don't doubt but many civil things have past between you. Your very humble servant.

Lady Brute. [*Aside to Const.*] Pray begone: he's so drunk, he can't hurr us to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall hear from us.

Const. I'll obey you, Madam. Sir, when you are cool, you'll understand reason better. So then I shall take the pains to inform you. If not—I wear a sword, Sir, and so good-by-t'ye. Come along, Heartfree. [*Exeunt.*

Sir John. Wear a sword, Sir—And what of all that, Sir? He comes to my house; eats my meat; lies with my wife; dishonours my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate—And when I ask a civil account of all this—Sir, says he, I wear a sword.—Wear a sword, Sir? Yes, Sir, says he, I wear a sword.—It may be a good answer at cross purposes; but 'tis a damned one to a man in my whimsical circumstances—Sir, says he, I wear a sword!

word! [*To Lady Brute.*] And what do you wear now? Ha! tell me, [*Sitting down in a great chair.*] What you are modest, and can't—Why then I'll tell you, you flut you. You wear—an impudent lewd face—a damned, designing heart—and a tail—and a tail full of —

[*He falls fast asleep snoring.*]

Lady Brute. So, thanks to kind Heaven; he's fast for some hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our story handsomely; for we must lie like the devil, to bring ourselves off.

Lady Brute. What shall we say, Belinda?

Bel. [*Musing.*]—I'll tell you: it must all light upon Heartfree and I. We'll say he has courted me some time, but for reasons unknown to us, has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from Sir John. That therefore hearing him upon the stairs, he run into the closet, tho' against our will, and Constant with him, to prevent jealousy. And to give this a good impudent face of truth, (that I may deliver you from the trouble you are in) I'll e'en, if he pleases, marry him.

Lady Brute. I'm beholden to you, cousin; but that would be carrying the jest a little too far, for your own sake: you know he's a younger brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true: but I like him, and have fortune enough to keep above extremity: I can't say I would live with him in a cell, upon love and bread and butter: but I'd rather have the man I love, and a middle state of life, that that gentleman in the chair there, and twice your Ladyship's splendor.

Lady Brute. In truth, niece, you are in the right on't; but 'tis late: let's end our discourse for to-night, and out of an excess of charity, take a small care of that nasty drunken thing there—do but look at him, Belinda.

Bel. Ah—'tis a savoury dish.

Lady Brute. As savoury as 'tis, I'm cloyed with it. Pr'ythee call the butler to take away.

Bel. Call the butler?—Call the scavenger! [*To a servant within.*] Who's there? Call Rascal! Let him take away his master, scour him clean with a little soap and sand, and so put him to bed.

Lady Brute. Come, Belinda, I'll e'en lie with you to-night;

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night; and in the morning we'll fend for our gentlemen to set this matter even.

Bil. With all my heart.

Lady Brute. Good-night, my dear.

[*Making a low curtesy to Sir John.*

Both. Ha, ha, ha.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Rafor.

Raf. My Lady there's a wag—My master there's a cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing—Women have depraved appetites—My Lady's a wag; I have heard all; I have seen all; I understand all; and I'll tell all; for my little Frenchwoman loves news dearly. This story will gain her heart, or nothing will. [*To his master.*] Come, Sir, your head's too full of fumes at present, to make room for your jealousy; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you, when your pate's empty. Come to your kennel, you cuckoldy, drunken sot, you.

[*Carries him on his back.*

My master's asleep, in his chair, and a snoring,
My Lady's abroad, and—Oh, rare matrimony!

SCENE, *Lady Fancyful's House.*

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. But, why did not you tell me before, Mademoiselle, that Rafor and you were fond?

Mad. De modesty hinder me, Matam.

Lady Fan. Why, truly modesty does often hinder us from doing things we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet, to do any thing you bid him? Do you think, to oblige you, he would speak scandal?

Mad. Matam, to oblige your Ladyship, he shall speak any thing.

Lady Fan. Why then, Mademoiselle, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his master, all that past at Spring Garden: I have a mind he should know what a wife and a niece he has got.

Mad. Il le fera, Madame.

Enter a Footman, who speaks to Mademoiselle apart.

Foot. Mademoiselle, yonder's Mr. Rafor desires to speak with you.

Mad.

Mad. Tell him, I come presently. *[Exit Footman.*
Rasor be dere, Madame.

Lady Fan. That's fortunate : well, I'll leave you together. And if you find him stubborn, Mademoiselle—hark you—don't refuse him a few reasonable little liberties, to put him in humour.

Mad. Laissez moi faire. *[Exit Lady Fan.*

[Rasor peeps in ; and seeing Lady Fancyful gone, turns to Mademoiselle, takes her about the neck, and kisses her.

Mad. How now, confidence !

Raf. How now, modesty !

Mad. Who make you so familiar, firrah ?

Raf. My impudence, hussy.

Mad. Stand off, rogue-face.

Raf. Ah—Mademoiselle—great news at our house.

Mad. Why, vat be de matter ?

Raf. The matter ?—Why uptails all's the matter.

Mad. Tu te mocque de moi.

Raf. Now do you long to know the particulars : the time when ; the place where ; the manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Mad. Nay, den dou kill me, Rasor.

Raf. Come, kifs me, then.

Mad. Nay, pridee tell me.

[Clapping his hands behind.

Raf. Good-by-t'ye.

[Going.

Mad. Hold, hold ; I will kifs dee.

[Kissing him.

Raf. So, that's civil : why now, my pretty Poll ; my goldfinch ; my little waterwagtail—you must know, that—Come, kifs me again.

Mad. I won't kifs de no more.

Raf. Good-by-t'ye.

[Going.

Mad. Doucement ; dere ; es tu content ? *[Kissing him.*

Raf. So ; now I'll tell thee all. Why the news is, that cuckoldom in folio is newly printed ; and matrimony in quarto, is just going into the press. Will you buy any books, Mademoiselle ?

Mad. Tu parles comme un libraire ; de devil, no understand dee.

Raf. Why then, that I may make myself intelligible to

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a waiting-woman, I'll speak like a valet de chambre. My Lady has cuckolded my master.

Mad. Bon.

Raf. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that. We can't yet prove matter of fact upon her.

Mad. N'importe.

Raf. But we can prove that matter of fact had like to have been upon her.

Mad. Oui-da.

Raf. For we have such terrible circumstances——

Mad. Sans doute.

Raf. That any man of parts may draw tickling conclusions from them.

Mad. Fort bien.

Raf. We found a couple of tight well-built gentlemen, stuffed into her Ladyship's closet.

Mad. Le diable !

Raf. And I, in my particular person, have discovered a 'most damnable' plot, how to persuade my poor master, that all this hide and seek, this Will in the Wisp, has no other meaning than a Christian marriage for sweet Mrs. Belinda.

Mad. Une marriage ? Ah, les drolesses !

Raf. Don't you interrupt me, hussy ; 'tis agreed, I say ; and my innocent Lady, to wriggle herself out at the back-door of the business, turns marriage-bawd to her niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair body to be tumbled and mumbled, by that young liquorish whipster, Heartfree. Now are you satisfied ?

Mad. No.

Raf. Right woman ; always gaping for more.

Mad. Dis be all den, dat you know ?

Raf. All ! Ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Mad. Dou be fool, dou know nothing.—Ecoute, mon pauvre, Rafor. Dou sees des two eyes ?—Des two eyes have see de devil.

Raf. The woman's mad.

Mad. In Spring Garden, dat rogue Constant meet dy Lady.

Raf. Bon.

Mad.——I'll tell dee no more.

Raf. Nay, pr'ythee, my swan.

Mad. Come, kifs me den.

[Clapping her hands behind her, as he did before.]

Raf. I won't kifs you, not I.

Mad. Adieu.

[Going.]

Raf. Hold—Now proceed. [Gives her a hearty kifs.]

Mad. A ça—I hide myself in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First dy drunken master come mal-à-propos ? But de sot no know his own dear wife, so he leave her to her sport.—Den de game begin. De lover say soft ting ; de lady look upon de ground. [As she speaks, Rasor still acts the man, and she the woman.] He take her by de hand ; she turn her head on oder way. Den he squeeze very hard ; den she pull—very softly. Den he take her in his arms ; den she give him little pat. ' Den he kifs her tettons. Den she say—pish, nay fie.' Den he tremble ; den she sigh. Den he pull her into de arbor ; den she pinch him.

Raf. Ay, but not so hard, you baggage you.

Mad. Den he grow bold ; she grow weake, he tro her down, il tombe dessus, le Diable assiste, il emporte tout ; [Rasor struggles with her, as if he would throw her down.] stand off, firrah.

Raf. You have set me a-fire, you jade, you.

Mad. Den go to de river and quench dyself.

Raf. What an unnatural harlot this !

Mad. Rasor.

[Looking languishingly on him.]

Raf. Mademoiselle.

Mad. Dou no love me ?

Raf. Not love thee !——More than a Frenchman does soup.

Mad. Den you will refuse nothing dat I bid dee ?

Raf. Don't bid me hang myself then.

Mad. No ; only tell dy master, all I have tell dee of dy lady.

Raf. Why, you little malicious strumpet, you ; should you like to be served so ?

Mad. Dou dispute den ?——Adieu.

Raf. Hold—But why wilt thou make me be such a rogue, my dear ?

Mad. Voilà un vrai Anglois ! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Va t'en au diable.

Raf.

Raf. Hold once more: in hopes thou'lt give me up thy body, I'll make thee a present of my honesty.

Mad. Bon ; écoute donc ;—if dou fail me—I never see dee more---if dou obey me---Je m'abandonne à toi à toi. [*She takes him about the neck, and gives him a smacking kiss.*]

[*Exit Mademoiselle.*]

Raf. [*Licking his lips.*] Not be a rogue!--*Amor vincit omnia.* [*Exit Rafor.*]

Enter Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Marry, say ye ! Will the two things marry ?

Mad. On le va faire, Madame.

Lady Fan. Look you, Mademoiselle, in short I can't bear it---No ; I find I can't---If once I see them a-bed together, I shall have ten thousand thoughts in my head will make me run distracted. Therefore run and call Rafor back immediately ; for something must be done to stop this impertinent wedding. If I can but defer it four and twenty hours, I'll make such work about town, with that little pert slut's reputation, he shall as soon marry a witch.

Mad. [*Aside.*] La voilà bien intentionnée. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, Constant's Lodgings.

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

Const. But what dost think will become of this business ?

Heart. 'Tis easier to think what will not become on't.

Const. What's that ?

Heart. A challenge. I know the knight too well for that ; his dear body will always prevail upon his noble soul to be quiet.

Const. But though he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his wife.

Heart. Not if you whisper him in the ear, you won't have him do't, and there's no other way left that I see : for as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we should not be ; and I don't think him quite blockhead enough yet. to be persuaded we were got into his wife's closet only to peep into her prayer-book.

Enter a Servant with a letter.

Serv. Sir, here's a letter, a porter brought it.

Const. Oh, ho, here's instructions for us.

[*Reads.*
" The

"The accident that has happened, has touched our invention to the quick. We would fain come off without your help; but find that's impossible. In a word, the whole business must be thrown upon a matrimonial intrigue between your friend and mine. But if the parties are not fond enough to go quite through with the matter, 'tis sufficient for our turn, they own the design. We'll find pretences enough to break the match. Adieu."

—Well, women for invention! How long would my blockhead have been producing this!—Hey, Heartfree! What musing, man! Pr'ythee be chearful: what sayest thou, friend, to this matrimonial remedy?

Heart. Why, I say, it's worse than the disease.

Const. Here's a fellow for you: there's beauty and money on her side: and love up to the ears on his: and yet—

Heart. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allowed to boggle at marrying the niece, in the very moment that you are deluding the aunt.

Const. Why, truly, there may be something in that. But have not you a good opinion enough of your own parts, to believe you could keep a wife to yourself?

Heart. I should have, if I had a good opinion enough of hers, to believe she could do as much by me. But pr'ythee advise me in this good and evil, this life and death, this blessing and curse, that is set before me: 'for to do them right, after all, the wife seldom rambles, till the husband shews her the way.

'*Const.* 'Tis true, a man of real worth scarce ever is a cuckold, but by his own fault. Women are not naturally lewd; there must be something to urge them to it. They'll cuckold a churl, out of revenge; a fool, because they despise him; a beast, because they loath him: but when they make bold with a man they once had a well grounded value for, 'tis because they first see themselves neglected by him.'

Heart. Shall I marry or die a maid?

Const. Why faith, Heartfree, matrimony is like an army, going to engage. Love's the forlorn hope, which is soon cut off; the marriage knot is the main body, which may stand buff a long time; and repentance is

the

the rear-guard, which rarely gives ground, as long as the main body has a being.

Heart. Conclusion then; you advise me to rake on, as you do.

Const. That's not concluded yet: for though marriage be a lottery, in which there are wonderous many blanks; yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven on earth is written. Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapped in all that luxury itself could cloath me with, I still should envy you.

Heart. And justly too; for to be capable of loving one, doubtless, is better than to possess a thousand. But how far that capacity's in me, alas, I know not.

Const. But you would know.

Heart. I would so.

Const. Matrimony will inform you. Come, one slight of resolution carries you to the land of experience; where in a very moderate time you'll know the capacity of your soul and your body both, or I'm mistaken. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, *Sir John Brute's House.*

Enter Lady Brute and Belinda.

Bel. Well, Madam, what answer have you from them?

Lady Brute. That they'll be here this moment. I fancy 'twill end in a wedding; I'm sure he's a fool if it don't. Ten thousand pounds, and such a lass as you are, is no contemptible offer to a younger brother. 'But are not you under strange agitations? Pr'ythee, how does your pulse beat?

'*Bel.* High and low; I have much a-do to be valiant: is it not very strange to go to bed with a man?

'*Lady Brute.* Um—it is a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.'

Enter Constant and Heartfree.

Good-morrow, gentlemen: how have you slept after your adventure?

Heart. Some careful thoughts, ladies, on your accounts, have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful thoughts on your own, I believe, have hindered you from sleeping. Pray how does this matrimonial project relish with you?

Heart.

Heart. Why, faith, e'en as storming towns does with soldiers, where the hopes of delicious plunder banishes the fear of being knocked on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible, after all, that you dare think of downright lawful wedlock?

Heart. Madam, you have made me so fool-hardy, I dare do any thing.

Bel. Then, Sir, I challenge you; and matrimony's the spot where I expect you.

Heart. 'Tis enough; I'll not fail. [*Aside.*] So, now I am in for Hobbe's voyage; a great leap in the dark.

Lady Brute. Well, gentlemen, this matter being concluded then, have you got your lessons ready? for Sir John is grown such an atheist of late, he'll believe nothing upon easy terms.

Const. We'll find means to extend his faith, Madam. But pray how do you find him this morning?

Lady Brute. Most lamentably morose, chewing the cud after last night's discovery, of which however he has but a confused notion e'en now: but I'm afraid the valet de chambre has told him all; for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of Belinda's marriage, I had no other answer but a grunt; from which, you may draw what conclusions you think fit. But to your notes, gentlemen, he's here.

Enter Sir John and Raser.

Const. Good-morrow, Sir.

Heart. Good-morrow, Sir John; I'm very sorry my indiscretion should cause so much disorder in your family.

Sir John. Disorders generally come from indiscretion, Sir; 'tis no strange thing at all.

Lady Brute. I hope, my dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir John. None, my dove.

Bel. If not, I hope, my consent to marry Mr. Heart-free will convince you. For, as little as I know of amours, Sir, I can assure you, one intrigue is enough to bring four people together, without further mischief.

Sir John. And I know too, that intrigues tend to procreation of more kinds than one. One intrigue will beget another, as soon as beget a son or a daughter.

Const. I am very sorry, Sir, to see you still seem unsatisfied

tisfied with a lady, whose more than common virtue, I am sure, were she my wife, should meet with better usage.

Sir John. Sir, if her conduct has put a trick upon her virtue, her virtue's the bubble, but her husband's the loser.

Const. Sir, you have received a sufficient answer already, to justify both her conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your family-affairs; but I perceive I am the man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir John. Would it did not concern me, and then I should not care who it concerned.

Const. Well, Sir, if truth and reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir John. Lord, Sir, you are very hasty: if I had been found at prayers in your wife's closet, I should have allowed you twice as much time to come to yourself in.

Const. Nay, Sir, if time be all you want, we have no quarrel.

Heart. I told you how the sword would work upon him.

[*Sir John muses.*]

Const. Let him muse; however, I'll lay fifty pounds our foreman brings us in, not guilty.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] 'Tis well—'tis very well—In spite of that young jade's matrimonial intrigue, I am a downright stinking cuckold—Here they are—Boo—[*Putting his hand to his forehead.*] Methinks, I could butt with a bull. What the plague did I marry her for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she would have lain with me; for I would have done so, because I liked her; but that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her?—If I put my horns into my pocket, she'll grow insolent—if I don't, that goat there, that stallion, is ready to whip me through the guts—The debate then is reduced to this; shall I die a hero, or live a rascal?—Why, wiser men than I have long since concluded, that a living dog is better than a dead lion. [*To Constant and Heartfree.*] Gentlemen, now my wine and my passion are governable, I must own, I have never observed any thing in my wife's course of life, to back me in my jealousy

lousy of her : but jealousy's a mark of love ; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

Lady Fancyful enters disguised, and addresses Belinda apart.

Conf. I'm glad to see your reason rule at last. Give me your hand : I hope you'll look upon me as you used to do.

Sir John. Your humble servant. [*Aside.*] A wheedling son of a whore !

Heart. And that I may be sure you are friends with me too, pray give me your consent to wed your niece.

Sir John. Sir, you have it, with all my heart ; damn me if you han't. [*Aside.*] 'Tis time to get rid of her : a young pert pimp : she'll make an incomparable bawd in a little time.

Enter a Servant, who gives Heartfree a letter.

Bel. Heartfree your husband, say you ? 'Tis impossible !

Lady Fan. Would to kind Heaven it were ; but 'tis too true ; and in the world there lives not such a wretch. I'm young : and either I have been flattered by my friends, as well as glass, or nature has been kind and generous to me. I had a fortune too was greater far than he could ever hope for ; but with my heart I am robbed of all the rest. I am slighted and I'm beggared both at once ; I have scarce a bare subsistence from the villain, yet dare complain to none ; for he has sworn, if ever 'tis known I am his wife, he'll murder me. [*Weeping.*]

Bel. The traitor !

Lady Fan. I accidentally was told he courted you : charity soon prevailed upon me to prevent your misery ; and, as you see, I'm still so generous even to him, as not to suffer he should do any thing, for which the law might take away his life. [*Weeping.*]

Bel. Poor creature ! how I pity her !

[*They continue talking aside.*]

Heart. [*Aside.*] Death and the devil—Let me read it again. [*Reads.*] “ Though I have a particular reason not to let you know who I am till I see you ; yet you'll easily believe 'tis a faithful friend that gives you this advice. I have lain with Belinda ;” Good ! “ I have a child by her,” Better and better ! “ which is now out at nurse ;” Hea-

ven be praised ! “ and I think the foundation laid for another ;” Ha ! old True-penny ! “ no rack could have tortured this story from me ; but friendship has done it. I heard of your design to marry her, and could not see you abused. Make use of my advice ; but keep my secret till I ask you for it again. Adieu.”

[Exit Lady Fancyful.

Const. [To Bel.] Come, Madam, shall we send for the parson ? I doubt here's no business for the lawyers ; younger brothers have nothing to settle but their hearts, and that I believe my friend here has done very faithfully.

Bel. [Scornfully.] Are you sure, Sir, there are no old mortgages upon it ?

Heart. [Coldly.] If you think there are, Madam, it may'n't be amiss to defer the marriage till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. We'll defer it as long as you please, Sir.

Heart. The more time we take to consider on't, Madam, the less apt we shall be to commit oversights ; therefore, if you please, we'll put it off for just nine months.

Bel. Guilty consciences make men cowards.

Heart. And they make women desperate.

Bel. I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heart. I don't wonder you are so quickly determined.

Bel. What does the fellow mean ?

Heart. What does the lady mean ?

Sir John. Zoons ! what do you both mean ?

[Heart. and Bel. walk chafing about.

Ras. [Aside.] Here is so much sport going to be spoil'd, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impatient Lady Fancyful, and her plots, and her Frenchwoman too ! ‘ she's a whimsical, ill-natured bitch ; and ‘ when I have got my bones broke in her service, ’tis ten ‘ to one but my recompense is a clap.’ I hear them tittering without still ! I'cod, I'll e'en go lug them both in by the ears, and discover the plot, to secure my pardon.

[Exit Rasor.

Const. Pr'ythee, explain, Heartfree.

Heart. A fair deliverance ; thank my stars and my friend.

Bel. 'Tis well it went no farther—A base fellow !

Lady Brute. What can be the meaning of all this ?

Bel.

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Bel. What's his meaning I don't know ; but mine is, that if I had married him—I had had no husband.

Heart. And what's her meaning I don't know ; but mine is, that if I had married her—I had had wife enough.

Sir John. Your people of wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both, will you speak that you may be understood ?

Enter Rastor in sackcloth, pulling in Lady Fancyful and Mademoiselle.

Rastor. If they won't, here comes an interpreter.

Lady Brute. Heavens ! What have we here ?

Rastor. A villain—but a repenting villain.

All. Rastor !

Lady Brute. What means this ?

Rastor. Nothing, without my pardon.

Lady Brute. What pardon do you want ?

Rastor. *Imprimis.* Your Ladyship's ; for a damnable lie made upon your spotless virtue, and set to the tune of Spring-garden. [*To Sir John.*] Next at my generous master's feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble thoughts with phantoms of disgraceful cuckoldom. [*To Confit.*] Thirdly, I to this gentleman apply, for making him the hero of my romance. [*To Heart.*] Fourthly, your pardon, noble Sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of banns, bishop's licence, friends consent—or your own knowledge. [*To Bel.*] And, lastly, to my good young lady's clemency I come, for pretending the corn was sow'd in the ground, before ever the plough had been in the field.

Sir John. So that, after all, 'tis a moot point whether I am a cuckold or not.

Bel. Well, Sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you myself, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the company. But I must know then, who 'tis has put you upon all this mischief.

Rastor. Satan and his equipage ; woman tempted me, vice weakened me—and so, the devil overcame me ; as fell Adam, so fell I.

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Bel. Then, pray, Mr. Adam, will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

Raf. [*To Mad.*] Unmask, for the honour of France.

All. Mademoiselle!

Mad. Me ask ten thousand pardon of all de good company.

Sir John. Why, this mystery thickens, instead of clearing up. [*To Rasor.*] You son of a whore you, put us out our pain.

Raf. One moment brings sunshine. [*Shewing Madem.*] 'Tis true, this is the woman that tempted me, but this is the serpent that tempted the woman; and if my prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing should be like the serpent's of old—[*Pulls off Lady Fancyful's mask.*] she should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

All. Lady Fancyful!

Bel. Impertinent!

Lady Brute. Ridiculous!

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Bel. I hope your Ladyship will give me leave to wish you joy, since you have owned your marriage yourself—[*To Heart.*] I vow, 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another wife, when you had one already so charming as her Ladyship.

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Confusion seize them, as it seizes me!

Mad. Que le diable étouffe ce maraut de Rasor!

Bel. Your Ladyship seems disordered; a breeding qualm, perhaps: Mr. Heartfree, your bottle of Hungary water to your Lady. Why, Madam, he stands as unconcerned as if he were your husband in earnest.

Lady Fan. Your mirth's as nauseous as yourself. Belinda, you think you triumph over a rival now: *hélas!* ma pauvre fille. Where'er I'm rival, there's no cause for mirth. No, my poor wretch, 'tis from another principle I have acted. I knew that thing there would make so perverse a husband, and you so impertinent a wife, that, lest your mutual plagues should make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the match, *hé, hé, hé, hé!*

[*Exit, laughing affectedly, Mademoiselle following her.*]

Mad. *Hé, hé, hé, hé, hé!*

All.

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir John. [*Aside.*] Why now, this woman will be married to somebody too.

Bel. Poor creature! What a passion she is in! But I forgive her.

Heart. Since you have so much goodness for her, I hope you'll pardon my offence too, Madam.

Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal fault.

Heart. So, Madam, now had the parson but done his business——

Bel. You'd be half weary of your bargain.

Heart. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, Sir.

Heart. Then let's to church;
And if it be our chance to disagree——

Bel. Take heed——the surly husband's fate you see.

Sir John. Surly I may be, stubborn I am not,
For I have both forgiven and forgot:
If so, be these our judges, Mrs. Pert,
'Tis more by my goodness, than your desert.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.



E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by LADY BRUTE and BELINDA.

L. B. *N*O epilogue!

Bel. *I swear I know of none.*

L. B. *Lord! how shall we excuse it to the town?*

Bel. *Why, we must e'en say something of our own.*

L. B. *Our own! Ay, that must needs be precious stuff!*

Bel. *I'll lay my life they'll like it well enough.*

Come, faith, begin——

L. B. *Excuse me; after you.*

Bel. *Nay, pardon me for that; I know my cue.*

L. B. *Oh, for the world, I would not have precedence.*

Bel. *Oh, lord!*

L. B. *I swear——*

Bel. *Oh, fie!*

L. B. *I'm all obedience.*

First then, know all, before the doom is f. d,

The third day is for us——

Bel. *Nay, and the sixth.*

L. B. *We speak not from the poet now, nor is it*

His cause—— (I want a rhyme)

Bel. *That we solicit.*

L. B. *Then sure you can't have hearts to be severe,*

And damn us——

Bel. *Damn us! let them, if they dare.*

L. B. *Why, if they should, what punishment remains?*

Bel. *Eternal exile from behind our scenes.*

L. B. *But if they're kind, that sentence we'll recall.*

We can be grateful——

Bel. *And have wherewithal.*

L. B. *But as grand treaties hope not to be trusted,*

Before preliminaries are adjusted:

Bel. *You know the time, and we appoint this place;*

Where, if you please, we'll meet, and sign the pea



